"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

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THE WEATHER
Today, hot and humid, a heavy afternoon thunderstorm, high 93. **Tonight,** cloudy, an evening thunderstorm, low 71. **Tomorrow,** sunny, high 88. Weather map, Page A16.

LUIS ANTONIO ROJAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Global Spectacle Unfolds
Mexico opened the 2026 World Cup against South Africa at Estadio Azteca in Mexico City on Thursday. More at nytimes.com.

Trump, Pivoting Again, Calls Off New Barrage, Claiming Deal Is Near

Reversal After Threatening Oil Takeover

This article is by ***Max Bearak****,* ***Anupreeta Das****,* ***Michael Levenson*** *and* ***Jonathan Swan****.*

President Trump began Thursday by threatening to bomb Iran for a third consecutive night and then seize Kharg Island, Iran's main oil export hub in the Persian Gulf, an escalation that risked opening a deadly new chapter in the monthslong war.

Hours later, he abruptly reversed course. In a post on social media, he said he had called off the strikes planned for Thursday night based "on the fact that discussions with the Islamic Republic of Iran have been brought to the highest level of Iranian leadership and approved."

At an event in the Oval Office on Thursday afternoon, Mr. Trump said the United States and Iran had agreed to a deal, "subject to finalization of documents," and that it could be signed in Europe as soon as this weekend, at a ceremony with Vice President JD Vance.

"It's a very strong memorandum of understanding that is a little conceptual," Mr. Trump said.

But a spokesman for Iran's foreign ministry, Esmail Baghaei, pushed back on Mr. Trump's assertion that both sides had reached an agreement.

"The claims which have been made regarding the agreement are speculative and nothing has been finalized," Mr. Baghaei said, according to Iran's state broadcaster.

Mr. Trump's pivot was the latest in a dizzying pattern, alternating between threats to escalate the war and claims that Iran is close to signing a peace deal.

Shortly before he called off the strikes on Thursday, Mr. Trump spoke to Pakistani officials, who have been mediating between Washington and Tehran. The Pakistanis told Mr. Trump that "we have a deal" with Iran, according to a senior administration official.

Mr. Trump also spoke to his partner in the war, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, "about the emerging memorandum of understanding with Iran to enter negotiations," Mr. Netanyahu's office said in a statement.

Israel is not a party to the agreement, the statement said, but Mr. Netanyahu thanked Mr. Trump for promising that once a final deal is reached, it would compel Iran to give up its highly enriched uranium, dismantle its nuclear program, limit its missile production and end its support of militias in the Middle East.

Mr Trump aid that once the deal was signed, Iran would reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the critical oil shipping route, and the U.S. military would lift its blockade on ships entering and leaving Iranian ports.

Mr. Trump added: "They will not have a nuclear weapon — they have agreed to that." It was not clear, however, if Iran had agreed to any changes in its nuclear program.

Multiple rounds of talks over the past two months have failed to produce an agreement to end the war, restrain Iran's nuclear program and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, and Mr. Trump did not offer any details to support his claims of a breakthrough.

Continued on Page A6

Banned Drugs Aid U.F.C. Star's Stunning Return

Injury Led McGregor to Famous Doctor and Doping Dispute

By MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT

When the Ultimate Fighting Championship star Conor McGregor was battling his opponent during a bout in Las Vegas in July 2021, he snapped his own left leg in two — a gruesome spectacle that shocked the national pay-per-view audience and threatened the career of the U.F.C.'s biggest draw.

Almost five years later, having made a seemingly miraculous recovery, McGregor is returning to the octagon for the first time. He is bigger and more chiseled, flexing and preening for cameras as he prepares for his highly awaited bout next month, again in Las Vegas.

McGregor's startling physical transformation has been the subject of speculation among U.F.C. fans, fighters and commentators like Joe Rogan, who have repeatedly claimed that he skirted the U.F.C.'s antidoping rules to use performance-enhancing drugs while recovering.

McGregor has never been tied directly to the substances. But a New York Times investigation reveals that he did take powerful, banned drugs, according to two people with direct knowledge of the matter. And he did so with the support of one of the most prominent sports doctors in the world, according to the doctor himself. McGregor then engaged in an active effort to evade scrutiny from antidoping officials, the two people said. They spoke on the condition of anonymity because they did not want to be identified discussing matters that were supposed to remain confidential.

The doctor, Neal ElAttrache, oversaw the surgery to repair McGregor's leg. He is a widely celebrated figure and has treated a litany of Hollywood actors and baseball and football stars. He is also the head physician for the Los Angeles Dodgers and the Los Angeles Rams.

In response to questions from The Times, ElAttrache said by text that after he had repaired McGregor's broken leg he sent him to

Continued on Page A11

Trump to Pick New Nominee Of Intelligence

This article is by ***Julian E. Barnes****,* ***Jonah E. Bromwich****,* ***Devlin Barrett*** *and* ***Benjamin Weiser****.*

WASHINGTON — President Trump said on Thursday that he would nominate Jay Clayton, the U.S. attorney in Manhattan, to be the next director of national intelligence, after the president faced a revolt from lawmakers over his choice for an interim director without any relevant experience.

Mr. Trump had been under pressure to move on from his decision to appoint Bill Pulte, a top housing official, as the acting director, replacing Tulsi Gabbard, who announced last month that she would step down from the post.

Mr. Pulte, who has used his current job to attack Mr. Trump's enemies, had come under withering criticism from Capitol Hill. Both Republicans and Democrats have argued he was unqualified to lead the nation's intelligence agencies.

Mr. Trump, in a social media post, encouraged the Senate to confirm Mr. Clayton "as soon as possible."

"Few people anywhere in the Legal Community are respected at the level of Jay," Mr. Trump wrote.

Mr. Clayton, 59, was recommended for the post by John Ratcliffe, the C.I.A. director, according to a person familiar with the conversation. The current plan is for Mr. Pulte to take over from Ms. Gabbard on June 19 and serve as the acting director until Mr. Clayton's nomination is reviewed by the Senate.

Mr. Pulte, the person said, will seek to shrink the office beyond the cuts Ms. Gabbard had made. Mr. Trump wants Mr. Clayton to lead a smaller office, more narrowly focused on coordination among the 18 intelligence agencies.

Senator John Thune, the Senate majority leader, got no warning about the announcement but spoke positively about Mr. Clayton's nomination.

"I think he's considered to be a very qualified professional with a great skill set for managing a complex problem set," Mr. Thune said. "We will try to get him up and considered as soon as possible."

Representative Jim Himes of

Continued on Page A10

Knicks Snap to Life, and Their City Doesn't Sleep

By SANTUL NERKAR

The evening at Madison Square Garden began with a canceled party, a spat between New York City's mayor and the owner of the arena, and many, many missed shots by the Knicks. In other words, it looked like yet another disappointing chapter for the team's long-suffering fans.

But after the Knicks rallied to secure the biggest comeback win in N.B.A. finals history, the director Spike Lee danced on the court while the pop star Taylor Swift waved a Knicks towel in the air. On the nearby streets of Midtown Manhattan, roars filled the air and some revelers stood on cars, food carts and scaffolding.

The Knicks are now one win away from delivering basketball glory to a city starved for a championship. And the party is back on.

The day began ominously when James L. Dolan, the Knicks owner, escalated a dispute with Mayor Zohran Mamdani.

In a radio interview, he blamed Mr. Mamdani and the police commissioner, Jessica S. Tisch, for heightened security around the arena. He canceled a watch party outside the Garden, declining to use a permit granted by the city.

Continued on Page A15

VINCENT ALBAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

After a remarkable comeback, the Knicks are one win from a title.

VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Delirium replaced despair on Wednesday night across New York.

TOP TIP Postseason failures at the rim haunted Knicks fans. Then OG Anunoby swooped in. PAGE B10

SALWAN GEORGES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Shimmering Again, but Will It Last?
Repair work on the Reflecting Pool is complete, but the real issue is whether longstanding problems have been resolved. Page A9.

New Generation of Candidates Takes Housing Cost Personally

Stuck With Renting, or Living With Parents

By KATE ZERNIKE

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Besides his suit and tie, David Morales had little to set him apart from the other 20-somethings he met as he campaigned over Memorial Day weekend to be the next mayor of Providence, R.I.

He stopped among the dealseekers at a clothing swap to try on a blue velvet blazer. He leaped before a crowd outside a dive bar where music blared and bubbles blew from a machine on the back of a bicycle.

"We're building a city all our neighbors can afford," Mr. Morales, the youngest member of the Rhode Island Legislature, promised the crowd outside the bar, a mayoral candidate's message that reflected his generation's most fervent desire, "a city where you don't find yourself priced out when it's time to renew your lease, a city that's not dominated by luxury housing."

Mr. Morales, a renter himself, is 27 and seeking to unseat a fellow Democrat 20 years his senior, Brett Smiley, who recently vetoed a bill that would have capped rent increases at 4 percent a year.

The issue of soaring housing costs and how to control them goes well beyond Providence. Across the country, from colonial-era cities like Rhode Island's capital to the sprawling suburbs of the Sun Belt, young politicians have embraced housing as the defining issue of their campaigns.

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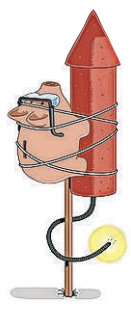
BUSINESS B1-8

Warning From World Bank
The war and soaring energy prices are slowing global economic growth to its weakest pace since the pandemic, according to a report. PAGE B3

Strapping In As SpaceX Goes Public
A guide to Elon Musk's rocket company, which is on the cusp of the largest I.P.O. ever, and what it means for investors. PAGES B4-7



INTERNATIONAL A4-8

Australia's Social Media Ban
Six months in, many teens are already back on platforms they were supposed to be blocked from. The ban's benefits may fall to the next generation. PAGE A4

U.K. Defense Secretary Resigns
John Healey unexpectedly announced his departure, saying Prime Minister Keir Starmer was failing to invest enough in the British military. PAGE A7

Trump Cools on Trade Deal
The president said he may not want to renew the U.S.-Canada-Mexico agreement, which in 2020 he forged and praised as the best ever. PAGE A8

NATIONAL A9-17

Leaning In on Election Fraud
The Justice Dept. seeks to assert more control over elections and challenge how states conduct them, as President Trump revives his fraud claims. PAGE A10

House Rejects Spy Power Bill
Lawmakers left the capital without extending one of the government's most powerful surveillance tools, all but assuring the law will expire. PAGE A10

Guilty Plea in Assassination
Federal prosecutors said they would not seek the death penalty for Vance Boelter, who killed a Minnesota legislator and her husband in 2025. PAGE A17

WEEKEND ARTS C1-10

Contradictory Visions
Gerhard Richter grew up surrounded by propaganda, first from Nazis, then from Communists. So his paintings reflect a sense of permanent doubt. PAGE C1

Spielberg Plays His Catalog Of Cosmic Hits
In "Disclosure Day," with Emily Blunt, infused with epic intentions, the filmmaker tries to bring the rest of us home. PAGE C1

SPORTS B9-15

Washington's Young Naturals
The Nationals never asked C.J. Abrams and James Wood to fill a leadership vacuum. It just happened. PAGE B15

Rooting for the Home Team
They are few. They are enthused. They are the die-hard fans of the U.S. men's national soccer team. PAGE B9

OPINION A20-21

Jessica Grose PAGE A20

Inside The Times

The New York Times

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The Newspaper and Beyond

TODAY'S PAPER

Corrections A17 · Opinion A20-21
Crossword C6 · Weather A16
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VIDEO

Kim Barker, who writes in-depth stories about the war in Ukraine, visited a church in Lviv that holds military funerals at the same time each day. Go inside one of the services at *nytimes.com/video*.

QUIZ

The Book Review's latest Quiz Bowl tests your knowledge of prophetic lines from popular works of science fiction. Can you recognize this one? "The year was 2081, and everybody was finally equal." *nytimes.com/books*

AUDIO

On the "Modern Love" podcast, the actor Laverne Cox discussed the greatest love of her life (so far), the messy way that relationship ended and her complicated bond with her mother. Listen at *nytimes.com/mlpodcast*.

Quote of the Day

"He does everything. He's a virtuoso."

LANDRY SHAMET, *Knicks guard, describing his teammate OG Anunoby, whose putback with 1.2 seconds left capped a record-breaking comeback against the Spurs in Game 4. Page B10.*

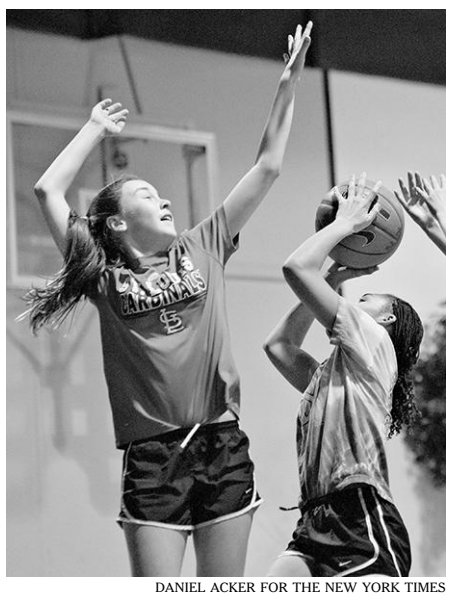
The Story Behind the Story

Good Basketball? At the Garden? Not Always.

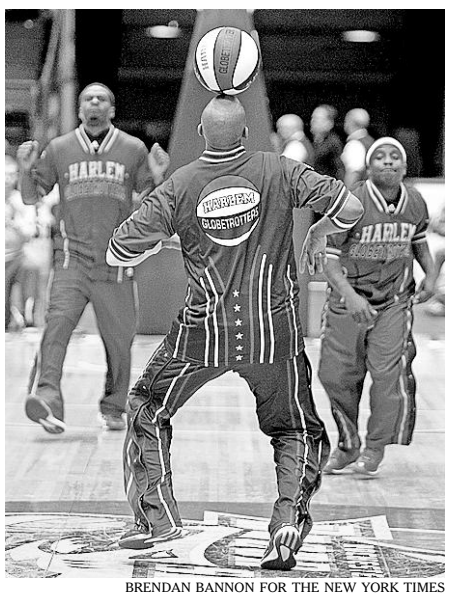
The 2015 Knicks were so dreadful that a Times beat reporter had to look elsewhere for a decent game.

By TERENCE McGINLEY

MICHAEL APPLETON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



DANIEL ACKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



BRENDAN BANNON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Not the Knicks series included articles about, clockwise from top, pickup at the McBurney Y.M.C.A. in New York, the Harlem Globetrotters and the fifth-grade Central Illinois Xpress.

On Jan. 5, 2015, the Knicks lost their 12th game in a row, to the Memphis Grizzlies, 105-83. New York was 5-32, tied for the worst record in the league. That night, the team had agreed to trade away two of its best players in a deal that went up like a white flag over the season.

Scott Cacciola, then the Knicks beat writer for The New York Times, reported the trade, but also wrote about the Knicks' performance in Memphis: "Futility was the preferred replacement for fluidity," he wrote, "surfacing in plays defined by an almost inexplicable level of ineptitude."

Those were the last words he would write about the Knicks for a while.

Four days later, The Times instead published an article by Mr. Cacciola about the Emporia State (Kan.) Lady Hornets, the top-ranked team in the Division II women's college game. It was the first article in a series called Not the Knicks, a long, winding road trip Mr. Cacciola took in search of well-played basketball.

Today, with the Knicks one win from a championship, the futility of the 2014-15 season may be hard for young fans to imagine. But older fans remember that year, and others like it, in the team's 53-year title drought.

This week, I caught up with the journalists on the Sports desk 11 years ago who made Not the Knicks happen. Interviews with them have been edited and condensed.

What was the thinking when you started Not the Knicks?

JASON STALLMAN, SPORTS EDITOR: The Knicks were awful. Around Jan. 5, they all but announced they were giving up on the season. They traded J.R. Smith and Iman Shumpert, and the team president basically said they were working on the draft at that point.

We thought, if they're giving up on the season, why do we have to go to every game? The idea that Scott should take a break from the team came from Ben Dolnick, the brother of Sam Dolnick, a former deputy on the Sports desk. We were enamored of this idea of finding good basketball, wherever it might be.

SCOTT CACCIOLA, KNICKS BEAT REPORTER: This was back when we were writing running game stories, which meant filing your article at the buzzer and revising the story for the next day's paper.

Jason emailed me and said something like, How would you like to take a break from covering this miserable team? I was like, sign me up. I didn't even know what he was talking about.

You published a callout asking readers to nominate good teams at any level, not just in the N.B.A. How did their suggestions shape the series?

STALLMAN: At first we thought, let's unshackle Scott and send him wherever. But then we said, Let's crowdsource the idea. That's how we ended up with people saying, You should come check out this team.

CACCIOLA: We never would have known about the Central Illinois Xpress, a team of girls dominating a fifth-grade boys' league; or the sisters from Mexico who were leading a high school team in Texas; or the running pickup game at the Y.M.C.A. on 14th Street that started in the 1970s.

For three months, Scott Cacciola, then the The Times's Knicks beat reporter, took a break from writing about the team.

The small illustrated icon attached to the series got people's attention.

CACCIOLA: After I wrote the first story from Kansas, we broke out the Knicks logo inside a No Smoking sign. That's when we got a lot of attention. There was some confusion because some readers thought we had abandoned the Knicks completely. We didn't; we were still sending stringers to games.

WAYNE KAMIDOI, SPORTS ART DIRECTOR: In Sports design at the time, running logos of teams was a good point of entry for readers. The circle with the red line wasn't the most elegant, but it signaled what the series was going to be.

JAY SCHREIBER, DEPUTY SPORTS EDITOR: That logo immediately told everybody what we were doing. We were off and running.

What traits did you want Not the Knicks articles to have?

STALLMAN: We wanted the overall mix to be eclectic. We didn't want to do all youth basketball or all domestic teams. One week, Scott was with the Harlem Globetrotters. Next, he was with a youth girls' team. Then he was in New Zealand to follow a team in the Australian Basketball League.

The name of the series told people what you *weren't* going to cover. That's not how journalists typically explain their work. Did you receive any blowback?

STALLMAN: It's difficult to imagine, considering where we are now in this Knicks season, with the entire city galvanized by their success — but it was truly the opposite at the time. The name of the series was a little cheeky and maybe a little aggressive journalistically. But the vast majority of people were on board.

CACCIOLA: Any sort of brushback I got was from longtime fans or traditionalists of beat writing. It came at a time when beat coverage itself was evolving, especially for newspapers. I think it signaled that we were a section that was going to do things differently. We weren't trying to please everybody.

Top Trending Headlines Online

Women Who Fled Iran Are to Be Deported to Central African Republic, Lawyers Say The Trump administration was preparing to deport nearly two dozen people to the Central African Republic on Thursday, including at least two Iranian women who had sought refuge in the United States. The U.S. government has documented significant human rights abuses in the Central African Republic, where the State Department has issued a "do not travel" advisory.

The Knicks' Comeback Was Epic. So Was Their Fans' Response. At the start of Wednesday evening, the Knicks seemed to be heading toward yet another disappointing chapter. By the end of the night, after the team rallied to secure the biggest comeback win in N.B.A. finals history, Spike Lee and Taylor Swift were dancing on the court, and roars filled the air on the streets of Manhattan. The Knicks are now one win away from delivering for its championship-starved fans.

30 Shows to Watch This Summer Beyond the N.B.A. finals and the World Cup, this summer's television and streaming schedule includes the return of "Ted Lasso" and "The Bear," along with new offerings like a Will Ferrell comedy about an aging professional golfer ("The Hawk") and a "Legally Blonde" prequel series.

Opinion | Better Sex, Better Hair, Better Sleep: 'Humanmaxxing' Is Here On "Interesting Times," an Opinion podcast, the biotech entrepreneur Christian Angermayer joined the host Ross Douthat to discuss the line between self-optimization and self-obsession.

A Headline From History

HOOVER RE-ELECTION IS FORECAST BY FESS

June 12, 1931. With "fiery remarks reflecting party confidence," delegates to a Young Republicans conference in Washington predicted victory for President Herbert Hoover and the Republican Party in the 1932 election, The Times reported. "When the American people realize what President Hoover has done for them in the present emergency, he will not only be unanimously renominated but he will be overwhelmingly re-elected," said Senator Simeon D. Fess of Ohio. In November of the following year, with unemployment soon to reach its Great Depression high of 25 percent, Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Democratic governor of New York, defeated Hoover with 89 percent of the electoral vote to the president's 11 percent. Hoover's philosophy of "rugged individualism" had proved no match for Roosevelt's "new deal for the American people."

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Facts of Interest

Data centers in Texas could use up to 9 percent of the state's water by 2040, according to a recent study by the University of Texas at Austin.

Texas Welcomed Data Centers. Now Governor Asks for Limits. A17

An investor who bought 1,000 shares in Tesla in 2010 at the initial offering price of $17 and held the shares until now would have made a profit of more than $5.8 million.

An Uncertain Offering From an Upstart Tesla Paved a Lucrative Path B6

In 1838, Frederick Douglass escaped slavery in Maryland. Seven years later, fearing recapture by slavers, the abolitionist set sail for a lecture tour in Britain and Ireland. A bronze statue of Douglass was unveiled in Belfast in 2023.

United by a Sense of Home, Then and Now C3

More than 46 percent of households in Colombia are headed by single women.

In One Candidate, Colombian Women See Familiar Strategy A8

The oldest player to take an at-bat for the Washington Nationals this season is 28 years old.

The Most Gen Z Team in the Majors Has Found a Couple of Leaders B15

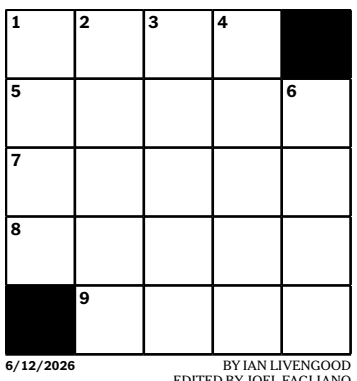
Reno, Nev., is the fastest-warming city in the United States.

Of Climate Change, and Hope C7

The United States imported more than $900 billion of goods from Canada and Mexico last year.

Trump Says He's 'Not Looking To Renew' Trade Deal He Once Called the Best Ever A8

The Mini Crossword



6/12/2026

BY IAN LIVENGOOD
EDITED BY JOEL FAGLIANO

ACROSS

1 Vertical post in a doorframe
5 What "E" stands for in the musical mnemonic EGBDF
7 6:7, e.g.
8 Rap or tap
9 Quick puff on a joint

DOWN

1 Kind of seasoning for Jamaican-style chicken
2 ___-garde
3 "That makes two of us!"
4 Badly missed jump shot, in hoops slang
6 Oxen's harness

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

	A	B	C	S
	C	O	A	L
F	U	N	N	Y
O	R	E	O	
B	A	S	E	

NIV BAVARSKY

Reader Corner

Callout: Are you traveling for the World Cup?

There has never been a World Cup quite like this one: more teams, more cities, higher prices and sky-high expectations.

As fans arrive in the 16 host venues across Canada, Mexico and the United States, we would like to hear from anyone heading to the 11 U.S. cities to attend a match or partake in the festivities.

Your responses will help us report on how travelers are experiencing one of the world's most anticipated events. We will read every response and reach out to you if we're interested in learning more about your story.

Tell us: Which match cities are you visiting? If you're coming from abroad, did you have any trouble getting a visa or entry authorization? What was the process like, and how long did it take? If you were refused a visa, how did it affect you? How did you get tickets to a match? How much did they cost? How did you find lodging and make arrangements to get to and from the stadium?

To share your experience, fill out a form at nytimes.com/readers. We won't publish any part of your response without following up first.

On the Scene

Sharing Key Insights Into a Reporting Project

PAULO NUNES DOS SANTOS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A sailor aboard an Irish Naval Service vessel named after George Bernard Shaw.

As concern rises in Europe over threats from Russia, the Irish government is working to modernize and bulk up its own defenses. For a recent article on Ireland's efforts to plug gaps in its military, Megan Specia reported from aboard a patrol vessel on the Irish Sea. Below, read edited notes from Ms. Specia, who shared more about her reporting.

Ireland's tradition of neutrality has made defense spending unpopular there, but with security risks growing in Europe, and criticism that it is too weak on defense, the Irish government is trying to change that.

In May, I joined the Irish Naval Service on a patrol, alongside the photographer Paulo Nunes dos Santos, to understand what the country's efforts to revamp its maritime security program look like.

We patrolled the Irish Sea with Lt. Cmdr. Maria O'Callaghan and the crew of the George Bernard Shaw, monitoring vessels that pass through the waterway that is also home to critical undersea infrastructure.

We were there as they questioned one passing research vessel. Ms. O'Callaghan explained that after 20 years in the Irish Naval Service, they were now questioning vessels at a level she has never seen before.

Some 75 percent of all trans-Atlantic cables pass through or near Irish waters, giving it outsize importance. But Ireland has long ignored its waters, described by Ms. O'Callaghan as "sea-blindness."

Read the article at nytimes.com/by/megan-specia.

Here to Help

A Recipe for Pasta Primavera

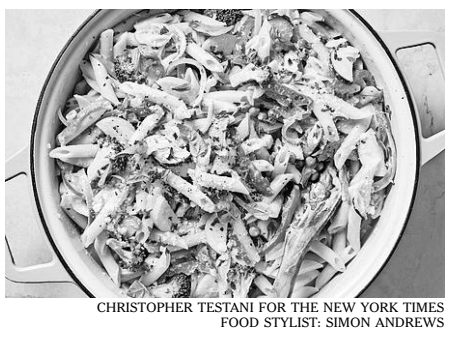
This vegetarian pasta is a great way to use all of your fresh vegetables from the farmers' market (or even the ones still hanging on in your fridge). The vegetables are cooked until they are just tender and still crisp, then coated in a delicate, lemony cream sauce and sprinkled with fresh Parmesan and herbs. **DAN PELOSI**

TIME: 45 MINUTES
YIELD: 6 SERVINGS

Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 pound penne or other short pasta
1 cup frozen peas
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 red onion, thinly sliced
1 red bell pepper, sliced into matchsticks
2 cups bite-size broccoli florets
1 zucchini, sliced into ¼-inch-thick half moons
1 yellow squash, sliced into ¼-inch-thick half moons
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 medium shallot, minced
4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1 cup vegetable broth
½ cup heavy cream
1 tablespoon lemon zest and 3 tablespoons lemon juice (from 1 lemon)
½ cup freshly grated Parmesan, plus more for serving
Chopped fresh basil, for serving
Chopped fresh parsley, for serving

1. In a large pasta pot, bring salted water to a boil. Add pasta and cook until al dente (according to package instructions); 2 minutes before the pasta is done, add the peas. Drain the pasta and peas, and set aside.

2. While the pasta is cooking, heat a large skillet (at least 12 inches) or a Dutch oven on medium and add olive oil. When the oil is hot, add the red onion, red bell pepper and broccoli. Cook, stirring occasionally, until broccoli is slightly softened, about 4 minutes. Add the zucchini and yellow squash, and continue to cook for 3 to 5 minutes, until all vegetables are tender but still crisp. Season with salt and pepper, and remove vegetables from the pan and set aside.



CHRISTOPHER TESTANI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES
FOOD STYLIST: SIMON ANDREWS

3. To the same pan over medium heat, add the butter, shallot and garlic. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly, until aromatic. Add the vegetable broth, bring to a boil and then decrease the heat to medium. Stir in the heavy cream, lemon zest and juice, bring to a simmer and cook until sauce thickens slightly, 4 to 5 minutes.

4. Add the reserved vegetables and the pasta and peas to the skillet, stirring to combine. Stir in the Parmesan until combined with the sauce, coating the vegetables and pasta. Season with salt and pepper. Garnish with basil, parsley and more Parmesan, then serve.

For more recipes, visit New York Times Cooking at nytcooking.com.

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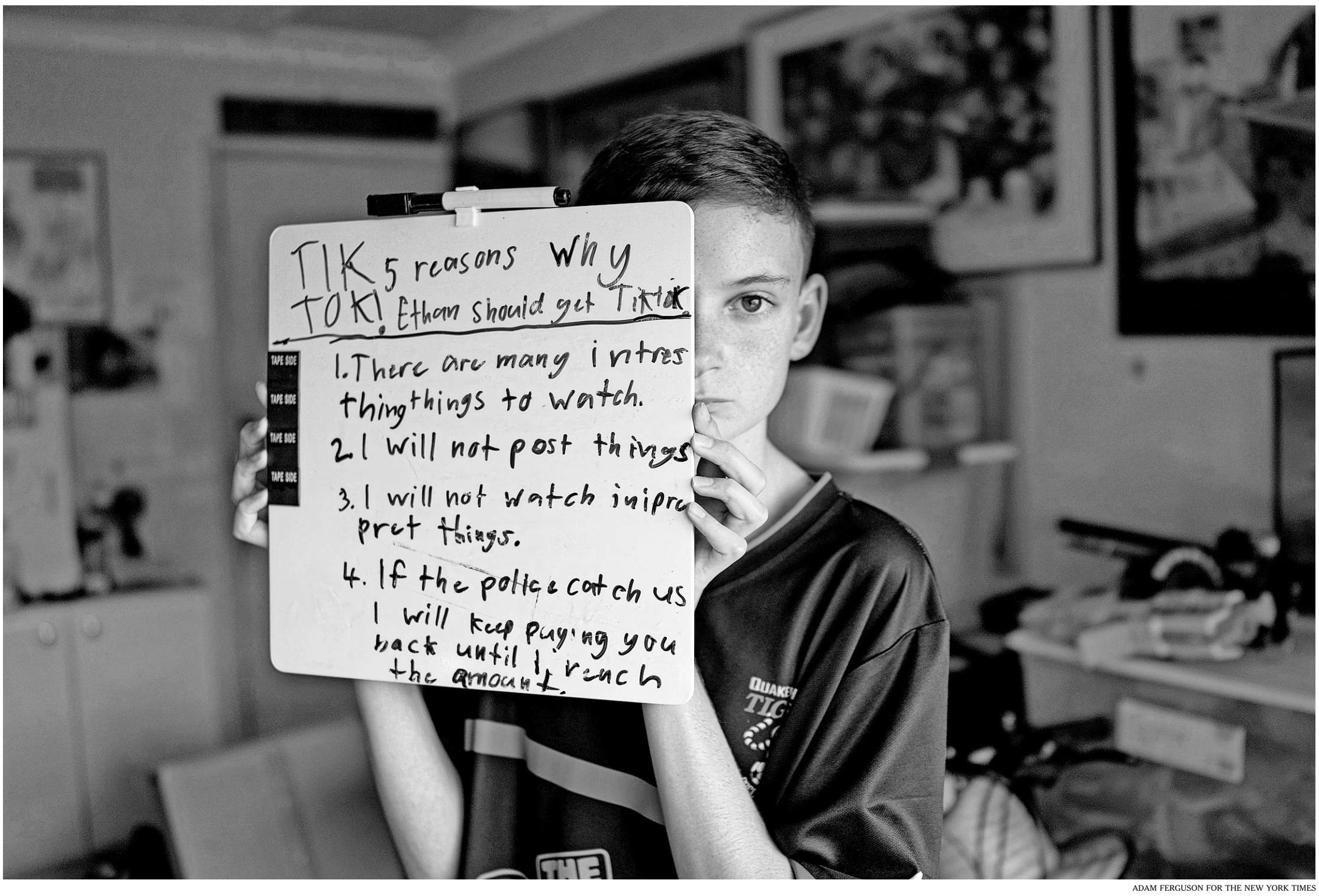
TIK TOK! 5 reasons Why Ethan should get Tiktok
1. There are many intres thingthings to watch.
2. I will not post things
3. I will not watch inipro prot things.
4. If the police catch us I will keep paying you back until I reach the amount.
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ADAM FERGUSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Naomi Parrish's son, Ethan, 12, with his list of reasons to have TikTok. His mother has held fast, citing Australia's new law. "It's given me a reason he can't have it, and that's powerful," she said.

Hoping Next Generation In Australia Will Benefit From Social Media Ban

By VICTORIA KIM

Late last year, Australia became the first country in the world to institute a nationwide ban on children younger than 16 having social media accounts.

Six months in, most indications are that the law has largely failed at keeping young teens off the platforms, in a disappointing start to an initiative carefully watched by parents and governments around the world.

But some Australian parents say the real effect of the law may be for the coming cohort of younger kids who were not yet on social media, and who may stay off because of the ban.

Take Naomi Parrish's 12-year-old son, Ethan, who got a smartphone for Christmas the month the law took effect, and has been trying to persuade his mother ever since to let him download TikTok.

Several times a day, Ms. Parrish's phone will buzz with requests for permission to download the app. He dug out an old white board to write a list of reasons he should be allowed to have it. He wrote two letters pleading his case, decorated them with stickers and left them on the kitchen counter.

Ms. Parrish has held firm in this battle of wills, fending off his entreaties day after day — citing the country's social media law.

"It's given me a reason he can't have it, and that's powerful," she said. "I've said to him, 'it's against the law, we'll get fined.'"

A Bumpy Start

Australia's eSafety Commission, the regulatory agency tasked with enforcing the law, reported in March that seven in 10 parents said their children still had an account on one of the age-restricted services. Other surveys have reported similar findings.

Teenagers have described easy workarounds — drawing a mustache on their face for an age estimation scan, creating a new account with a fake birth date, or using a parent or older sibling's account. Others said their accounts kept working without a hitch.

"The kids all laugh about it, 'What a joke, we haven't been taken off anything,'" said Lauren Hillier, 42, who said she had really looked forward to the law taking effect. She had hoped she wouldn't have to be the lone "evil nasty mom" for being strict about her 13-year-old son and 15-year-old stepdaughter's phone usage.

Her son still has access to Instagram and her stepdaughter remains on Snapchat, Ms. Hillier said, adding: "I don't know a single person who's lost an account."

Olivia Olsen, a 15-year-old in Canberra, said she still had access to her TikTok account and that a few friends who were kicked off were mostly able to get back on the apps.

"I feel like nothing changed on that day," she said.

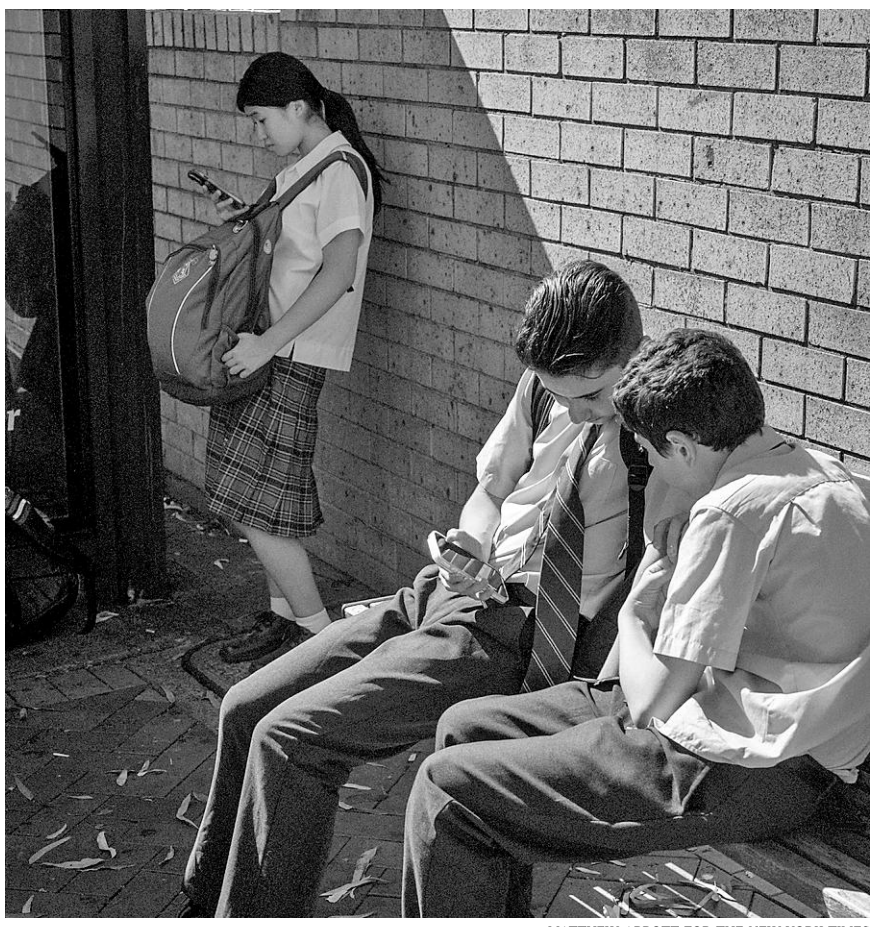
So far, these signs of fallibility haven't deterred other countries that are planning on introducing similar laws. Last month, Britain's online safety minister, Kanishka Narayan, traveled to Australia to learn about the implementation of the law as his country considers similar steps to protect children.

Changing the Norm

Much of the media, academic and regulatory attention around the efficacy of the law has been focused on young teens between the ages of 13 and 16 who were already using social media and were supposed to be weaned off it by the ban. (Most platforms already had in place a seldom-enforced minimum age of 13 in their user agreements.)

But parents with children under 12 who weren't already on social media apps said the real beneficiaries might be the next generation, who will enter their teenage years with the ban already in place.

Bec Barton, a mother of two boys in Quakers Hill in western Sydney, said she was hearing conversations among parents on the sidelines of soccer practice and at school drop-off that feel like the beginning of a cultural shift. Parents were collectively choosing to withhold smartphones or social media accounts from their children, a move that could end up reducing the appeal for the next generation, she said.



MATTHEW ABBOTT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Australia's eSafety Commission reported in March that seven in 10 parents said their children still had an account on one of the age-restricted services.

Ms. Barton's younger son, who is 10 and in his fourth year of primary school, already feels like he's missing out because most his friends are on Snapchat and other messaging apps. But children younger than him may face better odds, with fewer of them getting access to social media by default, she said.

"Kids are going to come up in an environment where none of their friends have access to it," Ms. Barton said. "It won't be the norm any more."

The government intends to enforce the ban, which puts the burden on tech companies. They face fines of up to about $34.8 million ($$49.5 million Australian dollars). The eSafety Commission has said it has ongoing investigations into five of the 10 platforms covered by the law for noncompliance — Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube — and said it would decide on enforcement actions by the middle of the year. (Parents won't be fined, despite what Ms. Parrish has been telling her son.)

Dany Elachi, a father of five in Sydney, founded a group called the Heads Up Alliance in 2022 so parents would have strength in numbers when it comes to holding off giving their children smartphones.

Australia's law, if it worked perfectly, should have turned the whole country into an alliance, said Mr. Elachi, whose children range in age from 9 to 16. He said members of his group — mostly made up of parents with children in primary school — expressed disappointment in the law not having more immediate effect. But he said it was always clear that the real change would have to come in individual households, and that the government would need to hold tech companies accountable.

"Ultimately, parents are realizing this is one piece of the puzzle to keep the next generation of kids from addiction," he said. "Parents still need to be gatekeepers."

Strength in Numbers

Carol Greive, the mother to a 12-year-old son, Jimmy, said she has tried to build relationships with families who share her concerns about social media and nurture his interests in other activities.

At their home in Newcastle, north of Sydney, she has also left self-help books around the house, including "How to Say No to Your Phone," "Busy Idiots" and "Raising Tech-Healthy Humans." And she told Jimmy that if he managed to refrain from social media until his 18th birthday, he would get 2,000 Australian dollars, about $1,400.

On a recent afternoon, on the way to ride their mountain bikes, Jimmy and his friend Rocco Morgan, 13, chatted about how most other boys they ride with are on YouTube, where they post slickly edited clips of their tricks.

Even though Jimmy isn't that interested in being on social media — "TikTok is the worst," he mutters — his friends tell him he should be on YouTube, he said.

"I don't think it's cool, but I think some people are like, you're not cool because you're not on social media," he said.

For Ethan, Ms. Parrish's son, the allure of TikTok is strongest in the 35-minute daily wait for the bus after school. The 150 or so high schoolers mostly stare at their phones and "there's no one to talk to," he said.

Ms. Parrish said she was aiming to hold strong until his 16th birthday, and is hoping the law will help.

If it hadn't been for the ban, she said, she might have caved and allowed him on Instagram, where there seems to be helpful soccer content from coaches. But the law has given her confidence that her instincts are correct. Instead, he entertains himself for hours hammering nails, toward his dream of being a carpenter.

"Still a no," Ms. Parrish told him recently, for what she said felt like the millionth time. "I'm not giving in."

ADAM FERGUSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The mother of Jimmy Greive, 12, is trying to build relationships with families that share her social media concerns.

Ticket Prices Prompt Sheinbaum to Skip World Cup Opener

By EMILIANO RODRÍGUEZ MEGA

MEXICO CITY — When fans tuned in to the opening game of the FIFA World Cup on Thursday between host nation Mexico and South Africa, they may have noticed a key figure missing from the stands: President Claudia Sheinbaum of Mexico.

Taking her seat at the V.I.P. section of the Banorte Stadium, the venue in Mexico City hosting the game, was Yolett Cervantes Cuaquehua, a young Indigenous woman who won a national contest held by the Mexican government to claim Ms. Sheinbaum's ticket.

"I'm not going to any game — not the opener or any other game," Ms. Sheinbaum told reporters last month, adding that she would instead watch the first match among thousands of her supporters in the Zócalo, the main square in Mexico City, the capital. This week, however, she said she might

A contest winner is awarded the Mexican president's V.I.P. seat.

change plans if protests erupt in the area.

Still, the move carries symbolic significance, as the leaders of host nations typically preside over their country's opening match. The World Cup, the planet's most-watched sporting event, has after all served as an influential platform and an instrument of soft power for leaders to affirm their global presence and improve their reputation.

But Ms. Sheinbaum has said her absence was a show of solidarity with the many regular Mexicans who were not able to afford a seat at the event — which has drawn criticism for its excessively high ticket prices and access restrictions.

She has also framed the act of giving Ms. Cervantes her ticket as a way to empower young women in a sport that continues to be heavily dominated by men.

"For many years, doors were closed to us — preventing us from becoming referees, soccer players, commentators or sports hosts," Ms. Sheinbaum said at a news conference earlier this year. "Today, we want to open those doors to women and their rights, so they can be whatever they want to be and have every opportunity to achieve it."

Ms. Cervantes, a Nahua athlete from the mist-covered highlands of Veracruz State in eastern Mexico, beat out 1,000 other young finalists from across the country by submitting a viral video in which she juggled a soccer ball with her feet and body while barefoot and wearing her traditional Indigenous attire.

In an interview, Ms. Cervantes, 21, said that she never had a formal trainer, but she fell in love with soccer as a child after watching a match between Real Madrid and Juventus in Spain — a prize trip for winning a public speaking contest in her state.

"This is a historic moment in my life," she said, adding that she found out she had won the World Cup ticket while working in the fields with her mother. "I don't think any other president has ever given up their ticket so that a young person could go represent them."

Ms. Sheinbaum has so far been the only leader from this year's host nations to confirm that she will not attend any World Cup game. But her counterparts in Canada and the United States are likely to also skip the opening games in their respective countries.

Prime Minister Mark Carney of Canada was flying to Europe on Thursday for diplomatic meetings and the annual Group of 7 — just a day before his country plays against Bosnia and Herzegovina in Toronto. And President Trump, despite years of personal courting by FIFA's president, Gianni Infantino, has criticized the high cost of tickets.

"I would certainly like to be there, but I wouldn't pay it either, to be honest with you," Mr. Trump told The New York Post in a telephone interview last month, despite Mr. Infantino having presented him a ceremonial ticket during the World Cup draw.

Whether Mr. Carney and Mr. Trump are planning to attend other games during the six-week tournament remains unclear. The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

Ms. Sheinbaum's decision not to attend might also have stemmed from a calculated political maneuver, analysts say, at a moment in which her administration faces a convergence of domestic crises.

She and her governing party, Morena, have come under fire for shielding Mexican officials accused by U.S. prosecutors of colluding with the cartels. Protesting teachers have paralyzed parts of the country, demanding higher wages and pension changes. Other groups — federal judges, anti-corruption activists and an anti-World Cup movement — are also planning to stage protests outside stadiums during the World Cup to voice their frustrations.

"It's a very good way of saying, 'If the eyes of the world are on us, we want the things that actually matter to be brought to light,'" Mónica de la Vega, a sports anthropologist in San Luis Potosí State, said about the protesters planning to seize the moment.

By giving away her seat, Ms. Sheinbaum might dodge an uncomfortable moment. Mexican stadiums, history shows, are notoriously hostile territory for sitting presidents.

"In this particular case, the Mexican attendees will be part of an economic elite that largely disapproves of Claudia Sheinbaum's administration," said Sergio Varela, a Mexico City-based sports sociologist. "I have no doubt that if she goes, she will be booed."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY QUETZALLI NICTE-HA/REUTERS

Yolett Cervantes Cuaquehua, an Indigenous woman who won a World Cup ticket contest last month, demonstrating her soccer skills, above, and with President Claudia Sheinbaum of Mexico, far left.

Elite Magic Club Denies Membership To D4RYL, a Technological Performer

By VICTOR MATHER

When David Penn performs onstage, he does what magicians have done for hundreds of years: He makes audiences wonder, "How did that happen?"

But Mr. Penn's act has a modern twist: He performs alongside a robot who seems to have magical abilities of his own. Human and robot, colleagues in magic.

To one venerable magic society, however, the robot, D4RYL, is not a true magician. The Magic Circle in London, an exclusive club of top magicians, rejected the robot's application to join last week.

"Technology can enhance magic beautifully, but historically there is a human storyteller at the center," Marvin Berglas, a magician and the president of The Magic Circle, said in an interview. "Wonder is emotional, not just mechanical."

Mr. Penn, himself a member of the Magic Circle, uses technology like iPads and smartphones in his act, marketing himself as "The Tech Magician." That led him to a technology trade show in Hong Kong in October.

"I turned a corner, and I was met by a robot," he said. "It felt a little bit scary. When you meet something like this in the flesh, you're kind of uneasy. But then it reached out to shake my hand. That moment changed my perception. It was magical."

Mr. Penn bought the robot and put it into his act, naming it D4RYL, after the 1985 sci-fi film "D.A.R.Y.L." about a boy and his robot.

Now, performing alongside Mr. Penn in a series of shows at the Magic Circle, D4RYL dances, makes champagne corks pop from a distance and at one point appears to send thoughts into audience members' minds.

So Mr. Penn decided that D4RYL was worthy of a place in the Circle, a society of 1,700 members founded in 1905 that includes many big name magicians, and even King Charles III. But the society disagreed.

"Magic is about making you feel something," said Mr. Berglas. "At the moment, humans have the edge there."

Mr. Penn defended D4RYL's magic bona fides. "It's onstage performing magic, creating genuine moments of wonder," he said. "If that's not magic, I don't know what magic is."

The Magic Circle's hesitance to admit a robot was shared by the Society of American Magicians.

"While robotics and A.I. have taken great leaps over the last couple of years, they are not yet to the point to take the stage," said Matthew Crabtree, the society's president. He noted that applicants must have a "genuine interest" in magic. "A robot can only be programmed to have an interest," he said.

The Magic Circle's rejection is complicated because it does have a nonhuman member: Sooty, a puppet who does magic on British children's TV. The society said that Sooty's 70-year career earned him a special membership, and that D4RYL could also be eligible decades from now.

"If he has 50 years to wait," Mr. Penn replied, "I'm not sure how the world's going to look."

When an application to the Circle is accepted, a candidate still must pass a test in front of other magicians, performing an 8 to 10 minute show. They are judged on magical ability, stagecraft and patter. The pass rate is only about 50 percent.

But D4RYL was not permitted to attempt that test. Mr. Penn said that if he could somehow dress the robot up so that the judges could not tell it wasn't a human, he would "absolutely guarantee" D4RYL would have passed.

If it did, it would not be the first time the Circle was fooled by a disguise. For many years, the society did not accept women. That led Sophie Lloyd in 1991 to disguise herself as a man — calling herself "Raymond Lloyd" — and gain membership. When she revealed the ruse, she was kicked out.

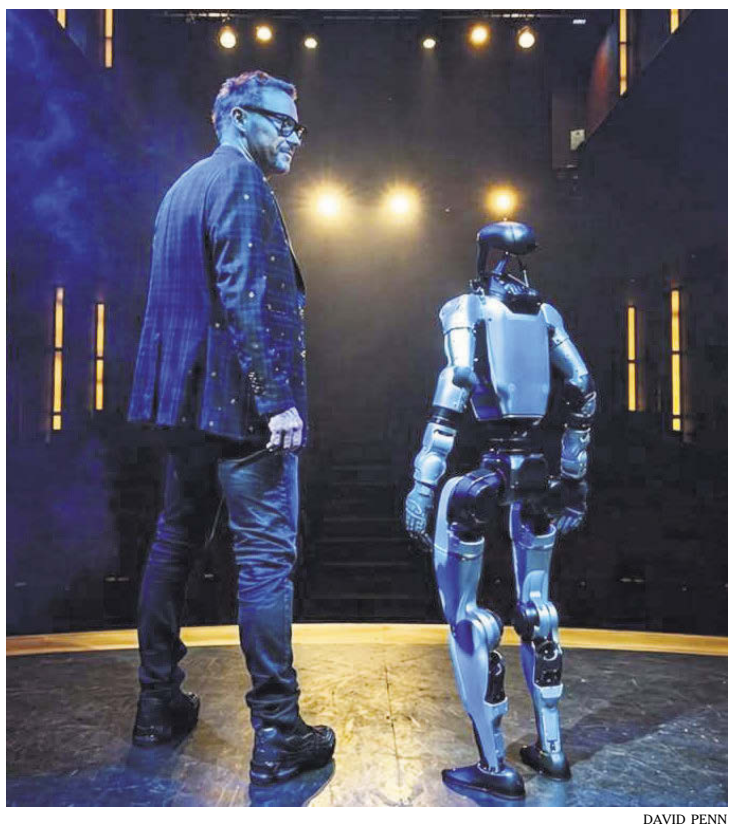
The society did begin admitting women later that year, and Ms. Lloyd joined as herself last year.

The Circle was also resistant for years to induct the American magicians Penn and Teller, because they sometimes give away how their tricks are performed. The two finally joined the society last year.

Mr. Penn remains committed to his robot, and to the nexus of technology and magic: "I believe technology will never replace wonder, but it certainly amplifies it."

But D4RYL for now will remain outside the Magic Circle.

"The day that a robot can handle a heckler, maybe we'll reconsider," Mr. Berglas said. "Especially if he buys me a drink at the bar."



DAVID PENN

David Penn with D4RYL, his mechanical protégé, which he purchased at a technology trade show in Hong Kong in October.

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War in the Middle East

Trump, Pivoting Again, Calls Off New Barrage, Claiming Deal Is Near

From Page A1

Before Mr. Trump retracted his latest threat to attack Iran, Iranian and American forces had exchanged attacks on two consecutive nights this week, raising fears around the region that the fighting in the Middle East might become impossible to contain.

After striking Iran on Tuesday night in retaliation for the downing of an Army Apache helicopter, Mr. Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth approved another round of attacks on Wednesday night that, they said, was meant to pressure Tehran to agree to peace on the president's terms. As Mr. Hegseth put it, "If we need to negotiate with bombs, we'll negotiate with bombs."

Riccardo Alcaro, an Iran expert at the Institute of International Affairs in Rome, said that Iran was unlikely to ratchet back its strikes on U.S. bases in the region as long as it is under attack.

"If the Iranians perceive this military power is to force them to accept concessions they are unwilling to accept, they are much more likely to respond by escalating than by giving in," he said.

The fighting has unfolded against the backdrop of an April cease-fire that was meant to usher in talks to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and permanently end the conflict.

But Iran's foreign ministry said on Thursday that the U.S. strikes this week had rendered that cease-fire — which had already failed to stop repeated attacks by both sides — "meaningless."

Mr. Trump has at times seemed wary about escalating a war that is unpopular with Americans, according to polls. But he started Thursday with a social media post declaring that the United States would hit Iran "VERY HARD TONIGHT," and then turn its sights to a more ambitious goal.

"At some point in the not too distant future, we will be taking Kharg Island, and other oil infrastructure points, and assume total control of their Oil and Gas Markets, much like we have with Venezuela," he wrote.

In an interview on "Fox & Friends" on Thursday morning, Mr. Trump sounded more ambivalent about taking the island.

"I don't know that America has the stomach for it, to be honest with you," he told the show's hosts. "You know, you'd make a fortune. But I don't know that America has the stomach. I think they'd like to see us come home."

And then hours after that, he had changed his tone entirely.

Storming the island would be difficult, analysts said, and could expose American ground troops to attacks.

A coral outcrop in the northern reaches of the Persian Gulf, Kharg Island sits roughly 15 miles off the Iranian coast. Before the war, about 90 percent of the country's crude oil exports transited through the island, which is surrounded by water deep enough to allow large oil tankers to dock.

Iran is believed to have bolstered its defenses on the island, including moving more military personnel there this year.

After Mr. Trump issued his threat to take the island on Thursday, Iran's lead negotiator with Washington, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, warned the United States on social media that "impulsive decisions will reset the entire board for the worse, explode energy infrastructure and markets and create an endless quagmire that you will be stuck in for years."

Because Kharg Island is some 400 miles away from the Strait of Hormuz, even U.S. dominance of the island would do little to stop Iran from controlling the flow of commercial ships in the waterway. It could also cause oil prices, which are up about 30 percent since the start of the war, to soar even further — especially if Iran retaliated by attacking oil infrastructure in the Persian Gulf.

Reporting was contributed Lara Jakes, Eric Schmitt, Maggie Haberman, Chris Cameron, Pranav Baskar, Sanam Mahoozi and Shirin Hakim.

ARASH KHAMOOSHI/POLARIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Iran's foreign ministry pushed back on President Trump's assertion that both sides were in accord.

U.S. to Expel Women Who Sought Safety From Iran

By MEGHA RAJAGOPALAN and HAMED ALEAZIZ

The Trump administration is preparing to deport nearly two dozen people to the Central African Republic on Thursday, including at least two Iranian women who had sought refuge in the United States, according to lawyers and a government official.

The flight, which is also expected to include migrants from Afghanistan and Syria, would mark the first such deportation to the Central African Republic, a country that has been plagued by conflict. The country is so dangerous that the U.S. State Department states on its website, "do not travel for any reason."

At least some of the migrants have received court orders in the United States prohibiting their deportation to their home countries because of the threat of persecution or torture, their lawyers said. Migrants face a higher burden of proof to win this "withholding of removal" status than they do to qualify for asylum.

The Trump administration is working to find ways to deport people despite these court orders. The government is cutting deals with other countries willing to take them. The U.S. has sought or signed agreements with dozens of countries, including Ghana, Equatorial Guinea and Eswatini.

The Iranian women scheduled to be on Thursday's flight have no criminal record and have been granted court protection against deportation to Iran, said Sahar Jalili Pawelski, one of their immigration lawyers. The precise circumstances of their cases were not immediately clear, but many Iranians who hold this protection fear persecution over their political beliefs or religious identity.

The women were in "serious disbelief" when they realized they were scheduled to be sent to the Central African Republic, said Ali Rahmana of the Iranian American Legal Defense Fund, who recently met with them.

The Department of Homeland Security said it would not confirm future deportations for security reasons. The planned deportations were confirmed by a U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the plans were not public. A senior immigration official in the Central African Republic said he had no knowledge of any final agreement.

The migrants have no ties to the country, and it is unclear where they will live or whether they could ultimately be sent back to Iran. The U.S. government has documented significant human rights abuses in the Central African Republic, including unlawful killings, torture and arbitrary arrest and detention.

"It's one of the hardest places in the world to live, and the idea that it would be considered a safe third country is absurd," said Anjli Parrin, director of the Global Human Rights Clinic at the University of Chicago Law School.

The existence of a deportation deal with the Central African Republic was reported by Reuters.

Ms. Parrin, who has worked extensively in the country, said it has no functioning health care system and that fears of violence are constant despite a tentative peace agreement between armed groups and the state.

Mr. Trump campaigned on a promise to curtail immigration, and the White House is looking to step up deportations to third countries as a way to make good on that pledge.

The administration had been in talks with the Democratic Republic of Congo to deport more than 1,000 Afghans who had aided the U.S. war effort in their country, rather than allowing them to immigrate to the U.S. as planned. Talks stalled after a wave of public criticism, leaving the administration to seek new alternatives.

Margaret Stock, an Alaska-based immigration attorney and a member of the legal team for an elderly Syrian man who was told he would be on the flight to the Central African Republic, said he has scars from being tortured in his home country. He feared returning to Syria because he is a Sufi Muslim, she said, and a U.S. immigration judge agreed that those fears were credible.

The man, she added, suffers from diabetes — a grave risk in the Central African Republic, where medical care, even for routine ailments, is extremely limited.

"He's not going to be able to access his medication, and he's going to die," Stock said. "And they know he's going to die if they send him there."

Ms. Stock said the man, who she said has no criminal record, had been released from immigration detention, but was later taken into custody again at a traffic stop.

HAZEM BADER/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

New prefabricated outpost settlement homes in May near the occupied West Bank village of Umm al-Khair and the Israeli settlement of Karmel, on the hill.

Israel in Major Push to Rapidly Expand West Bank Settlement

By ISABEL KERSHNER

JERUSALEM — Israel's government is expected to allocate hundreds of millions of dollars in the coming days to rapidly expand Jewish settlement across the occupied West Bank ahead of national elections this fall.

In a major push, the government is rushing to place temporary housing at about 60 empty sites, according to a draft of the proposal reviewed by The New York Times and an official with direct knowledge of the details. The official requested anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss it publicly.

If the plan goes forward as expected, the government will declare the new settlement points "temporary sites" and will fund the placement of 15 mobile homes and two additional community structures on each, according to the proposal draft. The intention is to create new realities on the ground and make physical changes to the territory that will be difficult to reverse if the country's current leaders are not reelected.

The government had been expected to approve the proposal on Thursday, but it decided to refer it to the smaller security cabinet for approval on Sunday. Security cabinet decisions can remain confidential, and the government has been trying to keep the move under the radar to avoid international attention, the official said.

The expansion would tighten Israel's hold over land that much of the world has long envisioned as part of a future Palestinian state.

"The government is on a reckless pre-election sprint to raid the public purse in order to create facts on the ground that will leave a scorched-earth policy for the next government," Peace Now, an Israeli activist group that opposes settlement, said in a statement on Thursday.

The group said there had been an 80 percent increase in settlements since the government was established in late 2022.

Mr. Netanyahu's government has long focused on expanding West Bank settlement with the stated goal of preventing the rise of a Palestinian state on the territory. Most of the world views the settlements as a violation of international law.

Israel argues that the West Bank land is disputed territory and its fate should be determined in negotiations. But there have been no Israeli-Palestinian negotiations for more than a decade and none are on the horizon. Many in the government want Israel to declare sovereignty over at least part of the West Bank.

The settlement expansion is one of a number of contentious changes that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his right-wing coalition are pushing through before elections. Once an exact date for the election is set, the government is supposed to refrain from making major decisions that can bind a future government.

One of the biggest settlement expansions in years, Thursday's decision is designed to hastily turn the sites into instant communities dotting the West Bank. Funding is also being allocated to build infrastructure and for a core group of settlers to inhabit the sites, making it harder for any future government to remove them.

The government has approved the establishment of dozens of new settlements in a series of cabinet decisions since taking office, in what critics have characterized as a massive land grab. It has also retroactively authorized outposts that were illegal even by Israel's standards, after being set up without explicit government authorization, in some cases decades ago.

"Since the beginning of our term, we have led a revolution in Judea and Samaria," Bezalel Smotrich, Israel's far-right finance minister and chief settlement promoter, said recently in Parliament, referring to the West Bank by its biblical names.

"We have approved more than 100 new settlements, tens of thousands of housing units and no less than 160 new farms," he added, referring to small, rural settlement points that use livestock and other agricultural means to control vast tracts of land.

More than half a million Israeli settlers live in the West Bank among about three million Palestinians.

The government had already approved the 60 locations slated for settlement a few months ago, but the sites have not yet been through official planning and authorization procedures, a process that usually takes years. The unusual decision planned for Sunday will allow the government to circumvent those procedures.

The expansion push follows a surge in settler violence in the West Bank in recent years. With the world largely distracted by wars in the Middle East, extremist settlers have intensified their attacks on Palestinians and their property across the West Bank in a violent campaign of intimidation that has emptied out entire Palestinian villages.

Israeli attitudes toward Palestinians have generally hardened since the deadly Hamas-led attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, which ignited the war in Gaza. Nevertheless, Mr. Netanyahu's governing coalition has lost some of its support and Mr. Smotrich is eager to show his settler constituency that he can deliver on his promises.

Funding has been allocated for the new sites over the next two to three years for mobile homes, community facilities, team-building professionals to help create strong communities and other amenities.

In early May, the Netanyahu government approved more than a billion shekels, or about $340 million for roads connecting the newly approved settlements, saying they were necessary for their development and for strengthening their hold over the territory.

DANIEL BEREHULAK/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Bezalel Smotrich, center, Israel's finance minister and top settlement promoter, with settlers last year.

NEWS ANALYSIS

In the U.K., a Cycle of Violent Attacks, Right-Wing Agitation and Riots

By MICHAEL D. SHEAR

LONDON — The cycle of violence and right-wing agitation in Britain has become all too frightening and frequent.

It can start with a stabbing, horrific in nature, that causes fear and anger. Condemnation from political leaders and law enforcement swiftly follows.

But when the attacker is an immigrant or a person of color, a malign, distorted narrative often explodes onto the internet. Right-wing politicians and commentators seize on it to foment outrage in support of their anti-immigrant agenda, aided by social media algorithms that feed on conflict and division. Within hours, the anger they stoke online has jumped to the real world, setting off protests that become angry riots.

There are pleas for calm and promises of action by government and law enforcement. But soon afterward, the cycle begins again.

Twice in the last 10 days, vicious knife attacks in England and Northern Ireland have followed that pattern. On Tuesday and Wednesday, protesters in Belfast who were furious about an attack by a Sudanese refugee set fire to cars and property and hurled objects at the police. That followed a night of angry rioting in Southampton last week after new video was released in the murder in December of an 18-year-old college student who was falsely accused by his attacker of having perpetrated a racist assault.

"There's a playbook," said Ciarán O'Connor, a senior analyst at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, which researches extremism, hate and disinformation globally. "An incident of violence like this is identified and rapidly amplified by not just a domestic but a global, transnational, far-right ecosystem who use such incidents to absorb them into their own kind of international narrative."

He said the dynamic has become "alarmingly familiar and even predictable."

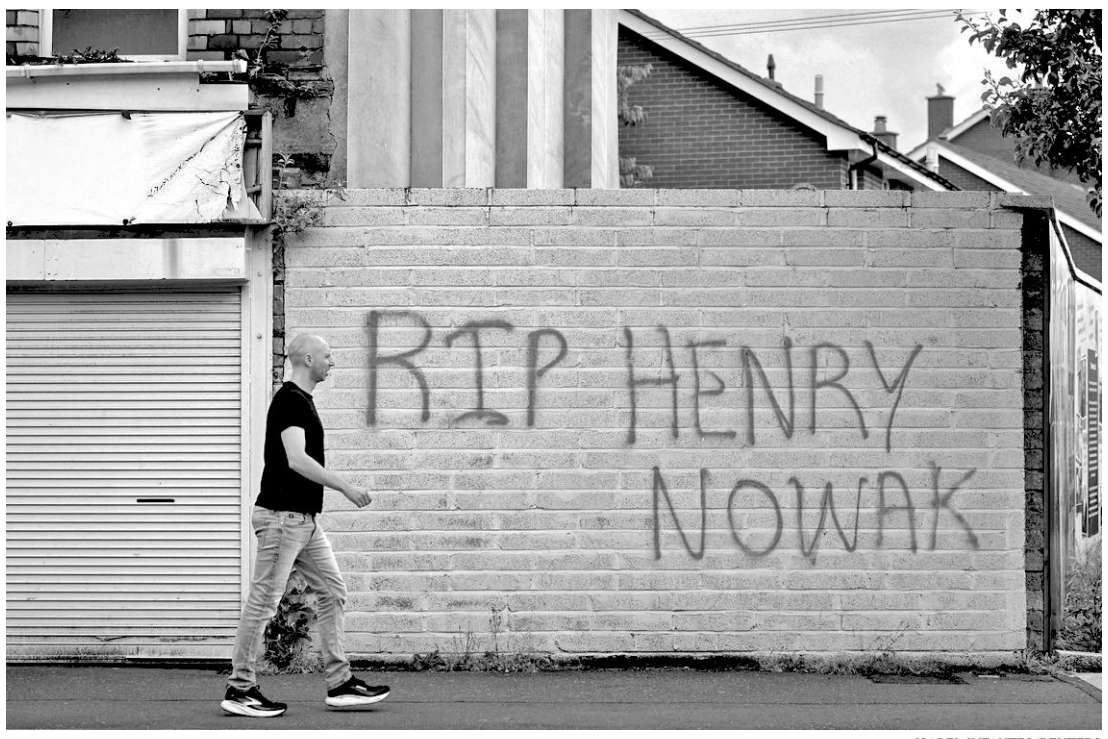
Britain is not alone. Across Europe and in the United States, ascendant right-wing political groups are amplifying the frustration and anger that people feel in the wake of a scary episode, and funneling it toward hostility to immigrants. Researchers say the pattern is followed by members of the far-right Alternative for Germany, or AfD, in Germany and France's National Rally Party.

"We have moved from stoking hatred online to actually bringing it into the streets in a variety of ways," said Marta Lorimer, a lecturer in politics at Cardiff University. "We're certainly seeing a blurring between this online world and what is happening in the real world, and, and part of the problem is that the political class doesn't quite seem to know how to deal with it."

Ms. Lorimer said Britain is especially vulnerable because it shares the English language with the United States, which she said makes it easier for right-wing groups there to use the American-based social media companies to stoke anger from afar.

PAUL FAITH/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

The demonstrations in Northern Ireland on Wednesday were in response to a stabbing attack by a Sudanese refugee, above. The murder of a college student prompted unrest in Southhampton last week.



ISABEL INFANTES/REUTERS

That was the case on Tuesday, when Elon Musk, the owner of X, called for people to "REPEATEDLY and LOUDLY" protest in Belfast. He highlighted an image that listed protest locations distributed by Tommy Robinson, an anti-Muslim agitator in Britain with multiple criminal convictions.

"The whole of the United Kingdom is hitting the streets tonight at 7pm following yet another invader attack on our people," Mr. Robinson, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, wrote on X.

Nigel Farage, the leader of Britain's populist, right-wing Reform U.K. Party, has used both of the recent knife attacks to push his anti-immigrant policy agenda. The party has become a major political force in Britain, winning local races across the country last month and consistently topping national election polls. That recent success gives him more political clout than he had a decade ago when his party was on the fringe of British politics.

After video footage emerged showing police handcuffing Henry Nowak, the college student, as he lay dying in December, Mr. Farage posted a video last week urging the public to "respond to this with pure cold rage." He accused the police of a system of "two-tier" justice that treats ethnic minorities better than white people in Britain. In that case, Mr. Farage expressed concerns about migrants even though the convicted killer, Vickrum Digwa, a Sikh, was born in Britain.

Speaking on Wednesday, Mr. Farage described the knife attack in Belfast as an attempted "beheading," adopting language used on the internet despite the fact that no law enforcement or government official has publicly called it that. In that case, the police charged Hadi Alodid, a 30-year-old Sudanese man, with stabbing Stephen Ogilvie in the head, the back and the neck, costing Mr. Ogilvie his eye.

"There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that this man should not have been in this country," Mr. Farage said, even though authorities said Mr. Alodid was in the country legally.

Sundar Katwala, the director of British Future, a think tank that focuses on issues of identity, said politicians like Mr. Farage are increasingly using what Mr. Katwala called "flashpoint moments" to appeal to the part of his base who want him to embrace more aggressive language.

There were roughly 500 homicides in Britain last year, many of them shocking. But if the victim isn't white, or the crime doesn't fit a narrative that will demonize immigrants, it is not seized on to stoke angry protests.

Other politicians have urged restraint and calm, while trying to acknowledge the appalling nature of the knife attacks. In Parliament on Wednesday, Prime Minister Keir Starmer condemned Monday's attack on Mr. Ogilvie in Belfast and the violence in the streets that followed on Tuesday night.

"We are all sickened by this attack, but the seeds of violence and disorder have no justification," he said.

Kemi Badenoch, the leader of the Conservative Party, said on X that "people have a right to be angry. And people have the right to expect their politicians to secure our borders." But she called the scenes of rioting in Belfast "deeply disturbing" and said that "no one has a right to burn families out of their homes."

Ofcom, which regulates the communications industry in Britain, has warned online service providers that they have a duty to ensure that they do not spread illegal content that could inflame a crisis — by inciting violence, for example. In an open letter on Wednesday, the agency wrote that "we are already contacting individual providers where we believe there are specific risks around the presence of illegal content relating to the civil unrest."

But those efforts have done little to curb the spread of incendiary and often misleading information on the platforms. Mr. O'Connor, of the Strategic Dialogue institute, said his organization found repeated instances this week of Facebook pages with sketchy claims that the Belfast attacker said "praise be God" in Arabic during the attack.

Ed Davey, the leader of the Liberal Democrats Party in Britain, denounced what he called a pattern in which a brutal crime "makes us all feel immense pain and anger, and then extremists who exploit that grief and anger to spread hatred and violence, aided and abetted by social media barons like Elon Musk."

The push for limits on online behavior are renewing accusations from politicians like Vice President JD Vance that Britain is undermining the free speech rights of conservatives. When Liz Kendall, Britain's secretary for technology, posted this week about tougher new online rules the government is considering imposing, scores of people responded to her by saying Britain wants to shut down legitimate debate.

"You pretend it's about safety but it's about control!" one person wrote. "We SEE YOU!!!!"

Experts who study the online platforms say that they are providing forums for right-wing politicians to become more a part of the mainstream.

"The stuff that we're hearing today, 20 years ago, would have been considered absolutely fringe, completely wild things that only the more extremist political parties would ever defend," Ms. Lorimer said.

At the same time, she said, liberal and centrist politicians like Mr. Starmer in Britain and some Democrats in the United States are feeling pressure to move to the right with policies that respond to the concerns of angry, frustrated voters.

That forces the right to "double down into even more extreme policies that then in turn become normalized," she said. "You really end up in a situation where it escalates quite quickly, and that's very much where we are right now."

With Smack at Starmer, Defense Secretary Quits

By MICHAEL D. SHEAR

LONDON — John Healey, Britain's defense secretary, resigned on Thursday, accusing Prime Minister Keir Starmer of failing to invest enough money in its military and leaving the country "well short" of what it needed to protect itself in a dangerous world.

Mr. Healey, who has been one of the prime minister's staunch allies, said he was informed on Monday that Mr. Starmer intended to announce a plan that would not increase military funding as much as Mr. Healey believes is necessary.

"I am being forced to make decisions that would reduce the readiness of our forces and increase the risk to personnel on operations, and could make the country less safe," Mr. Healey wrote in a letter to the prime minister that he posted on social media.

The unexpected resignation is a significant blow to Mr. Starmer, who is likely to face a challenge to his leadership of the Labour Party later this summer. Mr. Healey's clear lack of confidence in the prime minister bolsters the case of his critics, who insist the party needs a change at the top.

Mr. Healey said that Mr. Starmer's Defense Investment Plan would increase military spending to 2.68 percent of gross domestic product by 2030, short of the 3.0 percent that Mr. Healey and Mr. Starmer had discussed in the past.

"After explaining to you that I would not be able to accept a DIP settlement that does not give our forces the resources they need," Mr. Healey wrote, "I am now left with no other option than to submit my resignation as your defense secretary."

Mr. Starmer's office released a letter from the prime minister to Mr. Healey Thursday evening. In it, Mr. Starmer defended his investments in the country's military and said the choices he makes to pay for it will be "sustainable and fair."

"They will mean significant reallocations of funding from across government departments and the right choices to protect our nation," Mr. Starmer wrote to Mr. Healey. "Strong public finances are part of what keeps us safe — irresponsible borrowing only puts that at risk."

Questions about how much Britain plans to invest in the military have swirled through the government for months as Mr. Starmer delayed releasing the long-term defense plan.

A year ago, Mr. Starmer's government published a strategic defense review, which called for a significant improvement to military readiness, including the addition of British-built long-range weapons, the creation of a cyber command, and the development of drones and new ways to protect undersea cables.

In a speech at a British defense company last week, the prime minister warned of the dangers that Britain and Europe face.

"It is our intelligence assessment, and the assessment of other countries in NATO, that there could be an attack by Russia on NATO as soon as 2030," he said.

Mr. Healey took note of those comments in his resignation letter, saying they were evidence that "you know what defense needs."

There has also been immense pressure from President Trump, who has repeatedly accused Britain and European nations of failing to spend enough on defense. Mr. Trump has mocked the British Navy as being "too old," with aircraft carriers "that didn't work."

LEON NEAL/GETTY IMAGES

In quitting, John Healey accused Prime Minister Keir Starmer, his boss, of skimping on vital military spending.

But the sluggish economy in Britain has made it challenging for Mr. Starmer to find the money for a big lift in military spending without making politically unpopular decisions such as tax increases, cuts in other domestic programs or large-scale borrowing.

Each of those options comes with steep downsides. Tax increases would be highly contentious in a country where levies on the population are already relatively high. Many people in Britain remember with anger the steep cuts to popular services, known as austerity, put in place by previous Conservative Party-led governments. And financial markets would likely respond poorly to more government borrowing.

Mr. Starmer has come under pressure from the left flank of his party to invest more in the National Health Service, infrastructure, transport and other domestic programs that suffered years of capital underinvestment before Labour took power. That has been part of the argument made by Andy Burnham, the mayor of Greater Manchester, who is running for a seat in Parliament so he can try to replace Mr. Starmer as prime minister.

In his letter to Mr. Healey, the prime minister said he had already increased the defense budget after it was "hollowed out" by previous Conservative Party governments. He promised to go further in the plan he will release soon, but did not offer details in the letter.

"It will make the big strategic investments we need for the long term and give the certainty which private finance needs to invest," he wrote. "It will allow our armed forces to transform and modernize and back them with the tools they need to change the way we fight — and to deter our enemies."

In his own letter, Mr. Healey appeared to lay much of the blame for lower military spending on Rachel Reeves, Britain's top finance official, who oversees the Treasury. He told Mr. Starmer that he had initially been hopeful that there was agreement on the need to boost the country's military.

"Since then, you have been unable, and the Treasury has been unwilling, to commit the resources that the nation needs to defend the country at this time of rising threats," he wrote.

Ms. Reeves said this week that tax increases would be better than borrowing to pay for defense. Aides to Mr. Starmer have declined to say whether he agreed with her.

Government officials refused to say as recently as Wednesday afternoon what Mr. Starmer had decided to do. A spokesman told reporters on Wednesday that the investment plan would be unveiled before a NATO meeting at the beginning of July.

In Parliament on Wednesday, Kemi Badenoch, leader of the Conservative Party, accused Mr. Starmer of delaying because of concerns about how to pay for the defense investments.

"Projects have been put on hold, and Britain is getting weaker with every passing day," she said. "At a time of increased global instability and tension, with war in Europe and the Middle East, the prime minister is paralyzed, giving the armed forces less than half of the minimum that they need."

Mr. Starmer responded by noting that military spending had fallen during the 14 years that Ms. Badenoch's party was in power. He noted that his government had already agreed to increase it to 2.6 percent, from 2.3 percent, by 2027.

"We have carried out a strategic review of defense, and we are committed to publishing the defense investment plan before the NATO summit," he said.

Tony Travers, a professor of politics at the London School of Economics, said Mr. Healey's resignation carried weight in Britain because he was not regarded as a ruthlessly ambitious politician or someone prone to rash decisions.

A lifelong Labour politician, Mr. Healey has been a member of Parliament for decades, serving every Labour prime minister since Tony Blair, starting in 2001.

"He's a sort of rational moderate. Almost the ultimate exemplar of a rational politician," Mr. Travers said. "He's definitely not somebody who is prone to sudden and unexpected career moves, and so this suggests he was very, very disgruntled."

In One Candidate, Colombian Women See Familiar Strategy

By ANNIE CORREAL

BOGOTÁ, Colombia — He calls himself "The Tiger" and posts sweaty Instagram workout videos. He promises to "disembowel the left" and says that Colombia needs a president with male grit, though he uses a more colorful Spanish term.

Abelardo De La Espriella, a 47-year-old criminal defense lawyer who was endorsed by President Trump ahead of a June 21 runoff, has run a testosterone-fueled campaign, pitching himself as an iron-fisted Latin American strongman, with a streak of the manosphere.

Along the way, he has stirred debate about how tough he really is — one official in Colombia's leftist government accused Mr. De La Espriella of receiving butt implants, which he denied.

But with polls showing him ahead of his left-wing rival, his candidacy has also raised a serious question: Is a nation that pushed aside entrenched machismo to enact some of the region's most progressive policies for women now prepared to elect a defiantly macho leader?

It is a question that is relevant across the region, rights groups say. As right-wing populists win elections from El Salvador to Chile, many are drawing on a new — and similar — playbook, said Catalina Calderón, the Latin America director of the Women's Equality Center, a U.S.-based reproductive rights nonprofit.

Rather than attack women's rights directly, she said, they promise to purge "gender ideology," and to slash spending in the name of austerity — gutting agencies and services for women and girls along the way. "These similarities are not accidental," Ms. Calderón said.

Mr. De La Espriella has said he respects Colombia's laws and constitution but personally opposes abortion — raising concerns that he could revisit a landmark 2022 Constitutional Court ruling that legalized the procedure up to 24 weeks — as well as same-sex adoption.

He has also said that families should be responsible for sex education, not schools. "I do not accept that our children should be conditioned, contaminated with 'gender ideology'," he has said. Copying Argentina's president, Javier Milei, he has pledged to drastically shrink the state — starting with shuttering the Ministry of Equality.

He has also faced accusations of sexism after assailing a well-known female journalist's "ignorance" mid-interview, and for making lewd jokes on the campaign trail. But he has remained largely unbowed, wearing his old-fashioned ways as proudly as his ever-present Panama hat.

Mr. De La Espriella did not respond to a request for comment.

With military-style salutes, he's gained a fervent base of male supporters who say they do not think Mr. De La Espriella is particularly anti-woman.

"He's the great hope of all Colombians," said Carlos Alberto García Palau, a 54-year-old tour guide and former police officer in the city of Medellín. He represents "security, family, respect," he said.

Women voters are divided.

"The perception among women is not great," said Katherine González, 40, who drives for Uber in Bogotá, the capital. "The perception is that he's a machista."

Florence Thomas, one of Colombia's foremost feminist intellectuals and a central voice in the decades-long push to decriminalize abortion, put it more forcefully, saying, "I am really, really afraid of Abelardo."

Colombia is among the most advanced nations in Latin America when it comes to women's rights, she said, "but we feminists in Colombia have learned that all these hard-won rights are incredibly fragile.''

"I can assure you," she added, "women who understand what is at stake for their rights will vote for Iván Cepeda," the left-wing senator and human-rights activist opposing Mr. De La Espriella this month. Mr. Cepeda has explicitly called out "patriarchy" and has promised women greater support and inclusion in public life.

But there are also plenty of Colombian women who do not agree that the right-wing candidate poses a threat, or do not care. They consider security and tackling drug trafficking groups — Mr. De La Espriella's central campaign promises — to be more important.

"We want his iron fist against criminals," said Jennifer Orozco, a 32-year-old graphic designer, at a rally in Medellín last month.

Susana Mejía González, the coordinator of the National Women's Network of Colombia, a feminist advocacy organization, said, "What we believe is that in general, not just for women but for Colombian society as a whole, the rights agenda is not a relevant factor in people's decision-making in this election."

Still, gender has become a major undercurrent of the campaign.

Before the first round of voting, Mr. De La Espriella was running against several prominent women, including a conservative senator who had the backing of a powerful former president.

Women's issues have also been key to capturing votes: more than 46 percent of Colombian households are now headed by single women.

Mr. De La Espriella has called on women to join his movement — tigresas, to his tiger — and announced a slate of proposals geared toward working-class women, including 24-hour mobile units for domestic abuse victims and life sentences for child sex abusers.

He also enlisted his wife, Ana Lucía Pineda, in events and interviews and described himself as a "traditional family man" — father, husband, gentleman, and straight-talking son of Colombia's Caribbean Coast, or costeño.

Calling himself an "old school feminist," he joked that women should stay in their proper place: "the throne." When he was asked why he did not want to debate his main political rival on the right, the conservative senator Paloma Valencia, he said he preferred to treat their relationship "like a little teacup."

At rallies, he drew thunderous applause with lines like, "I have never failed a woman. I am going to protect you."

The machismo debate exploded last month after Interior Minister Armando Benedetti accused Mr. De La Espriella of being, in his words, "so, so fake" — citing hair implants, makeup and, memorably, "silicone in his butt, implants in his pompis."

Mr. De La Espriella, who has joked about his hair implants and his 5'7" stature — saying that his large testicles would not let him grow taller — brushed off the butt-job claim.

But days later, on a political talk show, he pressed the only woman reporter at the table, Laura Rodríguez, to look at a photo of him in a sweatsuit. While he might be "lacking in the rear," he said, the photo showed something else that had won him "some awesome votes from the female electorate."

He later apologized to Ms. Rodríguez, who said she had felt harassed, and defended himself by pointing to his work as a lawyer on landmark women's cases, including Colombia's femicide law, which designated gender-based lethal violence against women as a specific crime.

But the episode refused to fade away. Prominent journalists and politicians denounced his behavior. The family of the woman for whom the femicide law was named, Rosa Elvira Cely, accused him of exploiting her name for political gain and of taking credit for their work.

This month, after Mr. De La Espriella advanced to the runoff, a judge ruled that he had committed "political violence based on gender" when he called into question women's judgment as voters, and ordered him to apologize to Colombian women.

Female supporters railed at the left, characterizing the reaction as part of a global plague of cancel culture.

To María Jimena Duzán, a prominent Colombian journalist, Mr. De La Espriella is a political opportunist sampling from other far-right campaigns, a man who found God and his masculine persona just to win the presidency.

But that does not make him — and his growing following — any less alarming, she said.

In some Latin American countries where right-wing leaders have recently targeted gender-focused policies, activists and journalists have had to flee after receiving death threats.

Last month, Ms. Duzán's was on her popular YouTube channel reading her column denouncing Mr. De La Espriella, when the channel was flooded with cryptocurrency content. The hack triggered an automated system that took her offline.

While YouTube did not remark on the episode, Colombia's main press freedom group formally condemned it as part of a broader pattern of press intimidation by Mr. De La Espriella and his followers.

"His followers took it down," Ms. Duzán said.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FEDERICO RIOS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The presidential candidate Abelardo De La Espriella at an election rally last month in Medellín. He has announced a slate of proposals geared toward working-class women.

More than 46 percent of Colombian households are now headed by single women like Valery Cueto, with her son Jeremias, 2.

Canadian Pleads Guilty To Running Bitcoin Scam

By ZANE IRWIN

When the 19-year-old Canadian was pulled over in a speeding Rolls-Royce in Miami in March, the smell of cannabis billowing out and the amphetamines in his bag were the least of his worries.

For two years, court documents show, Trenton Johnston had built a lavish lifestyle through cryptocurrency fraud. Thirteen million dollars in stolen funds financed club outings, jewelry, flashy cars and at least one trip on a private jet.

Mr. Johnston, evading the U.S. immigration authorities in Florida after he overstayed a visa, the court documents say, posed as a representative for Google and cryptocurrency companies to gain access to prospective victims' accounts. Then a small cadre of friends and co-conspirators helped him hide his ill-gotten gains, with some of them running schemes of their own.

On Tuesday, Mr. Johnston, who is now 20, pleaded guilty in Federal District Court in Miami to a single count of conspiracy to commit money laundering in a case that illustrates the low-hanging opportunities that novel financial technologies offer to scammers.

His story may border on the outlandish, but it is not unique. In California, a group of young fraudsters accused of stealing over $200 million worth of Bitcoin from an investor in Washington, D.C., in 2024 used a similar method.

The following year, the F.B.I. tracked over $11 billion in losses to crypto theft, and those figures reflect only the victims who filed complaints with the agency.

According to an affidavit filed by a Homeland Security Investigations officer, Mr. Johnston crossed into Buffalo from Canada in October 2024 on a yearlong visa. He was not authorized to work in the United States.

Pocketed millions and financed flashy cars and jewelry.

A Miami car dealer named Brandon Tardibone helped Mr. Johnston launder stolen funds, which the Canadian used to buy luxury vehicles — a Lamborghini, two BMWs — short-term rentals, jewelry and more, court documents show.

The documents detail a March conversation on Signal, the private messaging app, between Mr. Johnston and a co-conspirator, whose identity was unclear.

Mr. Johnston sounded elated. He had just tricked a California resident into exposing 185 Bitcoin — worth about $13 million.

"Such a whale number," the other person declared.

"We actually smacked a 185btc target today," Mr. Johnston responded. "Like unironically smacked a 185."

Mr. Tardibone pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit money laundering alongside Mr. Johnston.

The deal allowed Mr. Johnston to avoid charges that could have meant up to 40 years in prison. Federal sentencing guidelines now suggest a punishment of around four to five years.

Lawyers for both defendants declined to comment on the record.

It was unclear whether Mr. Johnston will serve his sentence in the United States or in Canada, though he agreed to cooperate in his deportation as part of the plea deal. Court documents indicate that he is a first-time offender.

Trump Says He's 'Not Looking to Renew' Trade Deal He Once Called the Best Ever

This article is by ***Matina Stevis-Gridneff****,* ***Ana Swanson*** *and* ***Tony Romm****.*

TORONTO — President Trump has thrown nascent trade talks with Mexico and Canada into disarray, saying he wasn't sure he would renew the pact that has shaped the North American economy over the past three decades.

Asked about the continuing process to renew the free-trade deal between the United States, Mexico and Canada, Mr. Trump sounded off on Wednesday: "I don't know that I'm going to renew it."

He went on to repeat claims that the United States had no need for Canada or Mexico, the country's two top trading partners. The three-nation agreement underpins $2 trillion in annual trade and has, over the years, knitted several economic sectors across the borders together.

But Mr. Triump, since his reelection, has been casting the pact, and that close integration, as a burden for the U.S. economy.

"We don't need anything that Canada has, we don't need anything that Mexico has, but they need everything that we have," Mr. Trump said in the Oval Office, adding: "We don't need their cars, we don't need their lumber, we don't need their energy, we don't need anything that they have."

The comments come as Jamieson Greer, the United States trade representative, has started talks with Mexico over the pact, known as the U.S.M.C.A. Mexican officials are scheduled to come to Washington next week for the next round of talks.

Canada has been behind Mexico in launching its own parallel discussions with the United States, but its trade minister visited Washington this month to meet with Mr. Greer and signaled that technical discussions were about to begin.

Mr. Trump's dismissive comments on Wednesday highlighted how hard it will be to renew the U.S.M.C.A., the successor of the North American Free Trade Agreement and a trade deal the president himself signed during his first term.

At the time, in January 2020, Mr. Trump called it "the fairest, most balanced, and beneficial trade agreement we have ever signed into law — it's the best agreement we've ever made." Since then, Mr. Trump's opinion of the pact appears to have soured, as U.S. trade deficits with Canada and Mexico have generally trended higher.

Mr. Trump has a long history of threatening to scrap free trade deals, including the U.S.M.C.A. and its predecessor, NAFTA. So far the deal has been untouched — and even reinforced — by Mr. Trump's dramatic changes to trade policy.

The Trump administration's decision to exempt goods produced under the pact from most of its tariffs last year has been a major source of relief for many companies as U.S. tariffs on products from other countries have fluctuated dramatically.

Most goods imported into the United States from Canada and Mexico now come in tariff-free under U.S.M.C.A. rules. The U.S. imported more than $900 billion of goods from Canada and Mexico last year.

But as the three countries take up a renegotiation of the pact, its future is far from assured.

Companies in industries from automobiles to agriculture have argued that the U.S.M.C.A. is central to the U.S. economy.

Bob Hemesath, an Iowan corn and hog farmer who is chairman of the pro-trade group Farmers for Free Trade, said Wednesday that the idea that America didn't need anything from Canada "does not match the reality on my farm or any farm I know."

Canada was the source of 80 percent of U.S. imports of potash, an important fertilizer, and Canada and Mexico now buy roughly one-third of everything American farmers sell abroad, he said.

"American farmers are rightly going to be concerned by today's comments that the administration is not looking to renew U.S.M.C.A.," he said. "Failing to extend and strengthen this agreement would be a self-inflicted wound for American agriculture at the worst possible moment."

In Canada, the question of the future of the pact is a major source of economic uncertainty, but it also feeds into a much broader national reckoning with the level of dependence the country has on the United States. Mr. Trump's animus toward Canada, and his repeated claims that it should become the 51st state, have shaped the country's political fortunes and propelled Mark Carney, a career banker, to become prime minister with a mandate to diversify Canada's alliances away from the United States.

The text of the U.S.M.C.A. called for a review of the agreement six years after it came into effect, which falls on July 1. But the three countries have indicated that negotiations will continue past that date. U.S. officials traveled to Mexico for negotiations in late May and have scheduled further meetings in Washington next week and in Mexico during the week of July 20.

During the first round of talks in Mexico, U.S. officials discussed raising requirements for the proportion of a car that needs to be American-made in order to qualify for the pact's benefits, as well as extending similar rules to other industries.

Asked about Mr. Trump's comments on Wednesday, Mexico's newly appointed ambassador to the United States, Roberto Lazzeri, suggested reacting with a cold-headed approach.

"We are convinced — and we must work to convince others — that the treaty is in the best interest of all three countries," Mr. Lazzeri told reporters. "North America is stronger with this treaty."

Canada's trade ministry, which lead the trade negotiations, did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Matina Stevis-Gridneff reported from Toronto, and Ana Swanson and Tony Romm from Washington. Emiliano Rodríguez Mega contributed reporting from Mexico City.

The New York Times

GEORGE TAMES/THE NEW YORK TIMES

GABRIELLA DEMCZUK/THE NEW YORK TIMES

AL DRAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, as seen in 1971, 2014 and under a $14.2 million repair in 2026, has mirrored the Washington Monument for over a century. It has buried pipes that often leak.

The Reflecting Pool Is Shimmering Once Again, but Will It Last?

After Past Overhauls, It Looked Spruced Up. Then Algae Returned.

By DAVID A. FAHRENTHOLD

WASHINGTON — After weeks of repairs, the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool is reflecting again.

The century-old landmark has been slowly refilled over the last few days, after the completion of a $14.2 million project in which workers coated its concrete floor with a dark-blue-tinted waterproofing material.

When New York Times photographers visited the site on Monday, water had filled the pool's center — where it is deepest — and reached nearly to the sides.

The still, shallow pool mirrored the Washington Monument clearly, as it was designed to do.

President Trump celebrated the pool's restoration in a social media post, thanking himself for making it possible.

"It was originally opened in 1922, but never functioned properly — now it does!" Mr. Trump wrote on Saturday. "Thank you President Trump."

But the Reflecting Pool has been here before. The pool has had several major overhauls before this one, including a repair job by the Obama administration that cost more than $35 million.

It generally looks good afterward — at least, for a while. But its longtime problems — leaks and algae blooms — have always returned.

Mr. Trump is spending tens of millions to repair landmarks around Washington in advance of the nation's 250th birthday next month. To repair the Reflecting Pool, the Trump administration bypassed normal procedures and awarded a no-bid contract directly to a Virginia company, Atlantic Industrial Coatings.

Mr. Trump initially said he had personally chosen the company because it had worked on the swimming pool at his golf club in Sterling, Va. Mr. Trump also said that the work would cost $1.8 million.

In reality, the project cost more than seven times that figure — in part because the government agreed to pay the contractor a 20 percent profit margin, despite a National Park Service analysis that found that margin "inflated." Mr. Trump also later reversed himself and said he did not know the contractor.

At first, the contractor seemed to struggle with a crucial task. Its method for sealing the leak-prone joints between the pool's concrete slabs failed at least two trials, according to government documents obtained by The New York Times. But, after consulting the Army Corps of Engineers, Interior Secretary Doug Burgum said the contractor had found a solution that worked.

The project was originally set to be finished on May 22, but Mr. Trump later pushed that back, saying the pool would be finished by July 4. A spokeswoman for the Interior Department did not respond to a question asking when the pool would be filled completely.

Now comes the real test. Will the pool's seals hold when the concrete slabs contract and expand with temperature changes? Will algae blooms return when the pool bakes under Washington's summer sun? (The pool was already dotted with clumps of green algae on Wednesday, but the Interior Department said that was only residual algae being flushed out of its pipes.)

People familiar with the pool said they worried that the Trump administration had not repaired a critical, but hidden, piece of the Reflecting Pool's infrastructure. Underneath the National Mall, there are buried pipes that bring the pool's water to and from a nearby filtration plant.

Those pipes often leak, cutting the pool off from its filters. The Interior Department says it plans to repair them. Without them, there is a chance that the pool will turn a familiar shade of green.

SALWAN GEORGES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The current project, awarded in a no-bid contract, is part of President Trump's effort to repair landmarks in Washington ahead of the nation's 250th birthday.

STEPHEN CROWLEY/THE NEW YORK TIMES

The pool has long been the backdrop of demonstrations, including the Stand for Children rally in 1996. The current overhaul is set to be finished by July 4.

MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

Algae blooms returned in 2012 after a renovation. Experts fear the new repair did not fix the problem, which occurs when the pool is cut off from its filters.

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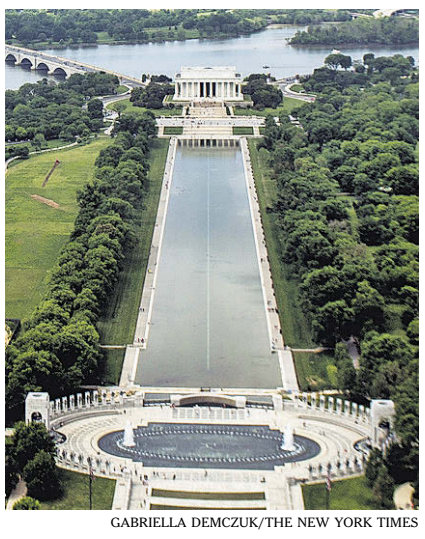

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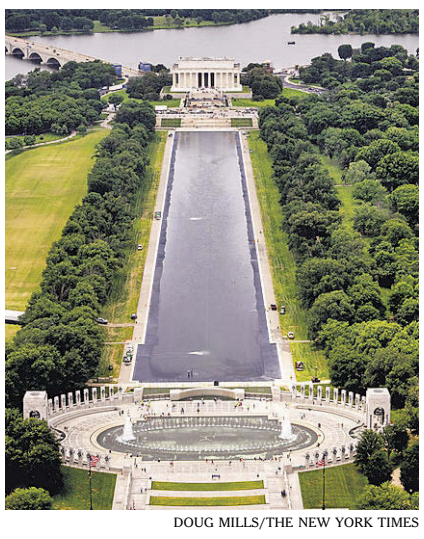


DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

From left, the pool in 1922, around the time of the Lincoln Memorial's dedication; in 2014, after the Obama administration's $35 million repair; again in 2021, when some longtime algae problems re-emerged; and this week after the most recent work to coat the pool's concrete floor with blue waterproofing material.

The 47th President

Justice Dept. Parrots Trump on Voter Fraud

By DEVLIN BARRETT

WASHINGTON — Speaking to a conservative radio host, the top federal prosecutor in Los Angeles made an unusually pointed prediction that cast doubt on the results of California's primary races, even as votes were still being counted.

"We will be charging some people," the prosecutor, Bill Essayli, told the host, Glenn Beck, on Monday, delivering a promise that would most likely have been considered a violation of Justice Department policy under decades of past practice. "It will be election fraud charges in the next — I hate to put timelines on things — one or two months I believe. We need some of these results to be certified so we can prove some of the allegations."

The declaration, issued by an outspoken loyalist to President Trump, was a vivid example of the Justice Department's approach to voting under the Trump administration. The agency is seeking to assert more control over elections and challenge how states conduct them, a shift that could have significant consequences in the midterm elections this year, when control of Congress hangs in the balance.

It is part of a broader effort by Mr. Trump to undermine confidence in the elections by repeatedly making baseless claims of voter fraud. The playbook dates to his first run for office in 2016, when he raised the specter of a rigged vote during his campaign and revisited the unfounded assertion even after he was declared the victor because Hillary Clinton had won the popular vote. In 2020, he revived the strategy, going so far as to try to overturn the results in swing states that had been won by Joseph R. Biden Jr.

In the last year alone, the Justice Department has sought voter roll data from most states; sued those that have declined to comply; opened a criminal investigation into 2020 election results in Fulton County, Ga., a state Mr. Trump narrowly lost that year; and demanded ballots from the 2024 race from Wayne County, Mich.

The administration is "throwing everything against the wall that they can find, and nothing is sticking," said David Becker, a former voting rights lawyer at the Justice Department who is now the executive director of the Center for Election Innovation and Research.

"Almost all of their work is going back over conspiracy theorists' allegations that were debunked five years ago," he added. "They are running out of tools in their toolbox."

California appears to be an early testing ground, as Mr. Trump and his allies stoke doubt about election outcomes they do not like, despite a lack of evidence of widespread fraud.

According to Justice Department regulations, officials "should not engage in overt criminal investigative measures in matters involving alleged ballot fraud until the election in question has been concluded, its results certified, and all recounts and election contests concluded."

The same section declares that the Justice Department "should generally avoid interfering or appearing to interfere with election administration, tabulation, validation or certification."

Asked about Mr. Essayli's remarks, a department spokeswoman, Natalie Baldassarre, said that election integrity was a top administration priority, and insisted that the department had legal authority to enforce election law, including by requesting state voter rolls.

The investigations in California, she added, were "in line with this authority, and will continue despite the state's unwillingness to comply and reassure voters that their elections are in fact free, fair and transparent." A spokesman for Mr. Essayli declined to comment.

The administration has already effectively dismantled its public integrity section in Washington, which had for years included round-the-clock legal advisers in the week leading up to a general election.

Its lawyers consulted with federal prosecutors and agents across the country about instances of possible election-related crimes, like ballot tampering or threats against candidates. Those lawyers tended to act as important checks on overly aggressive investigations that could be seen by the public as trying to affect the outcome of races.

Most often, the public integrity lawyers would advise investigators to proceed cautiously and quietly, rather than give more attention or importance to rumors or false accusations.

But under Mr. Trump, that institutional check has disappeared, with local U.S. attorneys encouraged to more aggressively investigate, prosecute and discuss their work on election fraud.

Mr. Essayli has not only loudly announced his investigations, but he has also dispatched a prosecutor to the offices where ballots were being counted. And he has appealed for anyone with evidence of voter fraud to come forward, saying that "what we need right now are witnesses."

Since taking over as the top prosecutor in Los Angeles, Mr. Essayli, a former state assemblyman, has proved willing to carry out Mr. Trump's agenda. He has dropped cases against the president's allies; aggressively pursued charges against protesters rallying against the administration's immigration crackdown only to face a string of losses; and investigated California over its policies toward transgender athletes.

Mr. Essayli has criticized voting laws in the state as particularly vulnerable to fraud and manipulation, joining a chorus of Republicans who have assailed the process. California is particularly slow when counting ballots because of how many residents vote by mail. After holding an election on June 2, officials in the state were still counting votes this week, prompting G.O.P. lawmakers to claim that the delay meant deceit.

> ***A federal agency has sought election roll data from most states.***

"Some of these efforts are so diabolical and so far upstream it is impossible to prove," Speaker Mike Johnson said. "But I think everybody knows instinctively something is wrong here."

Dora Rose, the deputy director of the League of Women Voters of California, countered the claims of fraud that Mr. Trump and his allies were pushing.

"They don't have the facts, so they're manufacturing fear and they're manufacturing chaos," Ms. Rose said. "A slow count is not a sign that something is wrong. In fact, it's a sign that things are going the right way."

States, not the federal government, do the bulk of the work involving elections, and election law experts said that the administration's efforts to portray California's voting as crooked were wrong and unfair, because the amount of voter fraud discovered by the authorities is exceedingly rare.

On social media, Mr. Essayli has tied his criminal investigations to a wide-ranging effort by the Trump administration to sue more than 25 states over their voter rolls, which includes the personal data of millions of Americans.

California, he said, "has stonewalled every effort to verify that only eligible U.S. citizens are registered to vote." He warned that his office would "not look the other way."

"We will investigate and prosecute," he added. "Every legal vote deserves to be counted. Every illegal vote cancels one out."

In recent weeks, Justice Department leaders have ramped up their rhetoric about elections, particularly regarding Mr. Trump's loss in 2020.

The acting attorney general, Todd Blanche, said in an interview last month on Fox News that there was "a ton of evidence that the election was rigged." Such evidence had existed for many years, he added, but the people responsible were "very good at hiding up misconduct."

Even though the White House has no formal or legal role in administering elections, Mr. Trump installed Kurt Olsen, who tried to help overturn his election loss in 2020, to oversee election integrity and security. Mr. Olsen has since moved to the Justice Department, working in a U.S. attorney office's in Florida that is investigating what Trump supporters call a "grand conspiracy" against him.

Despite the Trump administration's demands for voter roll data, at least eight federal district judges have turned the administration away. Half of those judges were appointed by Mr. Trump. The administration is appealing the decisions.

"I don't know that the Department of Justice has ever had a zero-for-eight streak," Mr. Becker said, adding that Mr. Essayli's comments were likely to make it even harder for a judge to rule in the administration's favor.

Under Mr. Trump, the Justice Department has struggled to retain personnel, rapidly losing thousands of career lawyers and installing ardent, less experienced loyalists in their place.

While the president's unfounded claims of fraud were eroding trust in the election system, Mr. Becker added, the Trump administration's election investigations were having a similarly corrosive effect inside the department.

"They are running out of people," he said. "When the only people you can hire are bad lawyers, you get bad cases litigated badly."

PHILIP CHEUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

California appears to be an early testing ground for the Trump administration's approach to voting.

Soumya Karlamangla contributed reporting from San Francisco.

Trump to Choose New Intelligence Chief

From Page A1

Connecticut, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, praised Mr. Clayton and said he would make a "terrific" director of national intelligence.

Senate Democrats may also support a speedy confirmation of Mr. Clayton, if only to push Mr. Pulte out of the acting role. Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said he needed a guarantee that Mr. Pulte would not serve as the acting director, a sentiment echoed by Senator Chuck Schumer, the minority leader.

"Pulte has to go," Mr. Schumer said. "He cannot be in the D.N.I. role. Our national security is too important."

The appointment of Mr. Pulte derailed the congressional reauthorization of one of the government's most powerful surveillance authorities.

But the announcement of Mr. Clayton, who is also a former chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, to be nominated for Senate confirmation seemed unlikely to immediately solve Mr. Trump's problems with reauthorizing the law.

The House on Thursday rejected a three-week extension of the law, Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which will expire at midnight on Friday. With Congress now out of town, and some lawmakers headed overseas, it would be difficult to schedule another vote before the deadline.

In an administration stocked with officials seeking to win the president's favor, Mr. Clayton has kept a relatively low profile. But since taking over the most prominent federal prosecutor's office in the country in April 2025, he has frequently golfed and socialized with the president, including at Mar-a-Lago, Mr. Trump's estate and club in Florida.

Mr. Clayton arrived at the Manhattan U.S. attorney's office at an unusual time for the proud institution, once nicknamed the sovereign district in a nod to its independence from Justice Department headquarters in Washington.

That independence was compromised almost immediately after Mr. Trump returned to the White House. He put Mr. Clayton in charge of the office months after his top Justice Department officials instructed its prosecutors to abandon a corruption case against the mayor of New York City, Eric Adams.

That directive led to the resignations of a number of leading prosecutors, including the office's interim U.S. attorney, Danielle R. Sassoon.

Mr. Clayton had long expressed an ambition to lead the office, and some veteran prosecutors had hoped he would stabilize it. But instead, he has often been absent, and office alumni have been struck by his willingness to speak out in support of the president.

As U.S. attorney, Mr. Clayton oversaw much of the document review related to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. His prosecutors also brought a case against Nicolás Maduro, then the president of Venezuela, who was captured by American military forces in January.

The office has brought several other prominent prosecutions. Last month it charged the commander of an Iranian-backed militia with plotting to attack Jewish sites in the United States, including a synagogue in New York City.

Mr. Clayton came under particular criticism in the legal community, including by Southern District alumni, after he refrained from commenting publicly when the Trump administration fired one of the senior prosecutors in his office, Maurene Comey, the daughter of James B. Comey, the former F.B.I. director.

More recently, he did speak out, to buttress Mr. Trump's concerns about voter fraud. This week, he appeared on CNBC's "Squawk Box" and raised concerns about the recent elections in California, after Mr. Trump suggested there had been fraud in the vote.

Mr. Clayton told CNBC that the country was "doing an absolutely terrible job" on issues of election integrity, "and the American people are right to question it." He also questioned California voting laws, including the lack of voter identification.

"I'm not saying that there is fraud," he said. "I am saying that the opportunity for fraud makes no sense to me when we can make a much better system."

During her time as director of national intelligence, Ms. Gabbard won praise from Mr. Trump for her work on elections. She joined an F.B.I. raid on voting records in Georgia. Still, Ms. Gabbard did much to dismantle the foreign malign influence center, which had been built up in the Biden administration to warn the public about election threats.

Mr. Clayton will remain as the U.S. attorney until he is confirmed for the director of national intelligence post, his spokesman, Nicholas Biase, said late Thursday.

If Mr. Clayton is confirmed, it is unclear who will succeed him on a temporary basis until a successor is confirmed. Much of the office's work was already being overseen by two veteran prosecutors — Amanda Houle, the chief of the office's criminal division, and Sean Buckley, the deputy U.S. attorney.

JEFFERSON SIEGEL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Trump's pick to lead the national intelligence agency, Jay Clayton, became the U.S. attorney for Manhattan in 2025.

Reporting was contributed by Carl Hulse, Maggie Haberman, Jonathan Swan and Dustin Volz.

House Rejects FISA Spy Law Extension

By ROBERT JIMISON and DUSTIN VOLZ

Members of Congress departed Washington on Thursday without acting to extend one of the government's most powerful surveillance authorities for collecting information on foreign threats overseas, all but assuring that the law will expire as scheduled on Saturday.

In a 218-to-198 vote, the House rejected a measure to temporarily renew a statute that underpins the government's cornerstone electronic spying program, known as Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Not long afterward, Democrats blocked a similar last-ditch effort in the Senate, underscoring the stalemate ahead of a Friday midnight deadline to extend it.

A clutch of bipartisan lawmakers had until recently been negotiating some marginal changes to the law in a push to earn enough support from privacy advocates to renew the authority for three years. But the group splintered after President Trump said last week that he was installing Bill Pulte, his top housing official and a close ally who has no intelligence background, as acting director of national intelligence.

Democrats, including those who had been pushing for the spy law's renewal, said they would not pass legislation extending it unless Mr. Trump backed down from his pick of Mr. Pulte or nominated a suitable permanent pick. Up until Thursday afternoon, the president had refused, despite Republican entreaties to do so or risk a lapse of a critical surveillance power.

But hours after the extension bill failed in the House and lawmakers began leaving Washington for a weeklong recess, Mr. Trump said he would nominate Jay Clayton, the U.S. attorney in Manhattan and former chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, as his permanent pick for spy chief.

It was not immediately clear whether Democrats would view Mr. Clayton more favorably than Mr. Pulte, and the announcement appeared to be too late to prevent the expiration of Section 702. Mr. Trump also did not withdraw Mr. Pulte as his choice for acting spy chief — a demand made by some of Democrats. "I pray that we do not have a serious calamity on our shores."

> ***Trump's permanent pick for intelligence director comes late.***

But the law has long faced resistance from civil libertarians on both the left and the right who are concerned that it allows the government too much latitude and tramples on privacy protections. Lawmakers in both parties have pushed for years, mostly without success, for stronger restrictions on how the F.B.I. treats Americans' communications that are incidentally swept up in foreign intelligence collection.

This year, however, the debate has been further complicated by the selection of Mr. Pulte.

Democrats have argued that Mr. Pulte, who has used his perch as the director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency to carry out a campaign of retribution on behalf of the president, would weaponize the nation's intelligence apparatus to do Mr. Trump's bidding. The president, who has long desired a spy chief who would comply with his desire to punish his perceived enemies, top Democrats.

The expiring authority permits the government to collect from U.S. technology companies like Google and AT&T the communications of foreigners located abroad without a warrant when seeking foreign intelligence information. Officials from multiple administrations have credited the program with helping identify terrorist plots, combat cyberattacks and monitor the activities of foreign adversaries.

Speaker Mike Johnson laid its imminent expiration at the feet of Democrats, calling their opposition to the temporary extension "dangerous, and very, very shameful," even though more than a dozen Republicans joined them in defeating the measure.

"They are willing to jeopardize the safety and the security of the American people to make a cheap political point," Mr. Johnson said has already urged Mr. Pulte to conduct mass firings of employees at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. The current spy chief, Tulsi Gabbard, has overseen significant downsizing at the agency.

On Thursday, Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, the top Democrat on the Intelligence Committee, said that Mr. Trump's naming of Mr. Pulte had blown up a potential bipartisan compromise to reauthorize the law that had been on a "glide path."

"There have been a half a dozen exit ramps for the White House on this problem," he told reporters. "They have chosen not to take them."

In the House, Representative Hakeem Jeffries of New York, the minority leader, urged Democrats to oppose the temporary extension, saying it lacked necessary changes to the surveillance programs and expressing frustration over Mr. Pulte's appointment.

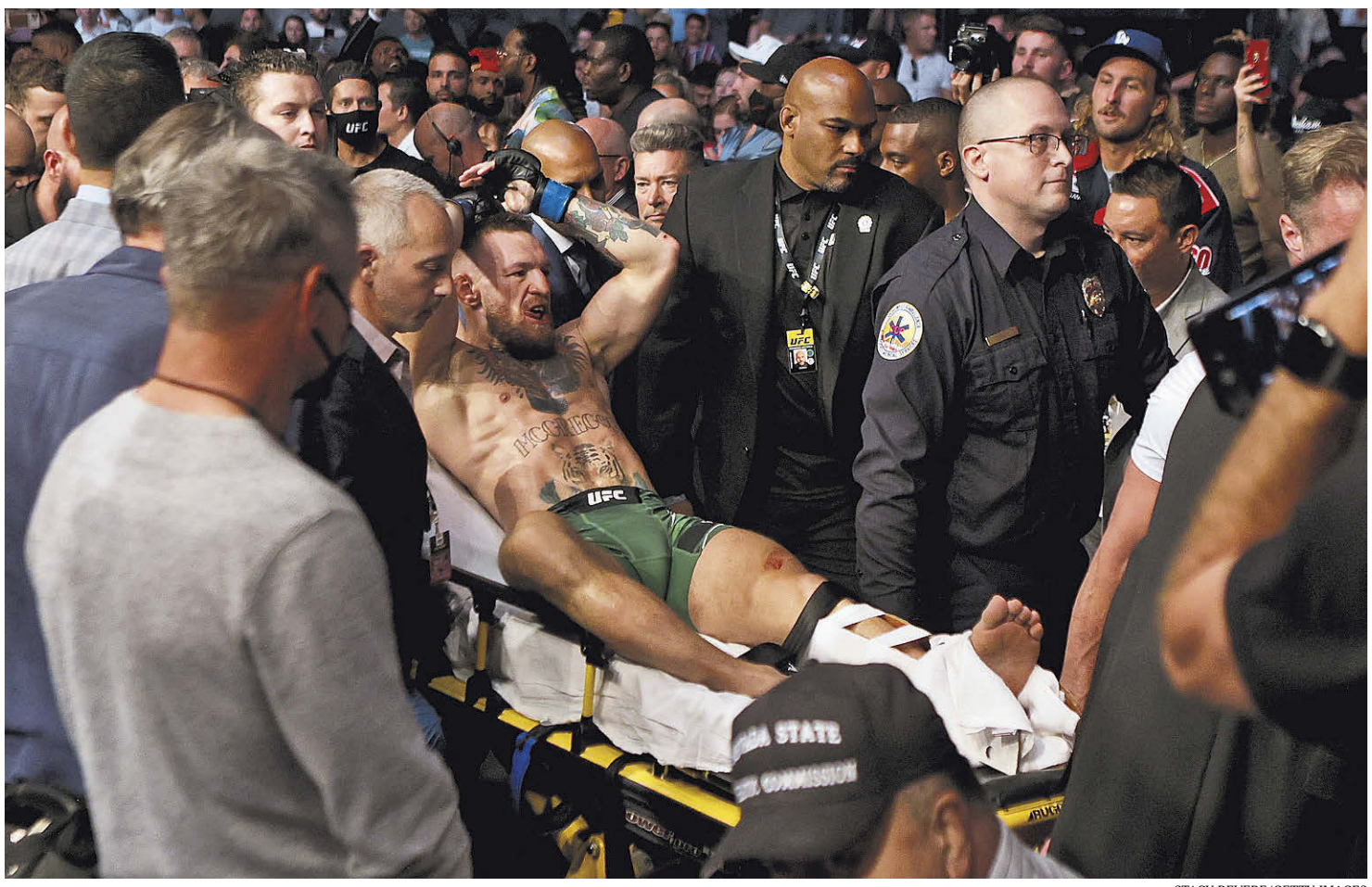
"There is a path to reauthorizing FISA, but it will require enacting meaningful reforms," Mr. Jeffries said before the vote in a statement issued with other Democratic leaders. "We oppose this bill to kick the can further down the road."

Nineteen Republicans and all but seven Democrats voted against the stopgap measure. Hours later, Senate Democrats objected to bids by both Senator Tom Cotton, Republican of Arkansas and the chairman of the Intelligence Committee, and Senator John Thune of South Dakota, the majority leader, to win quick approval of temporary extensions.

The Senate is scheduled to return on Monday, while the House is planning to return on June 23.

Should the Section 702 statute sunset, a built-in safety mechanism would most likely enable it to continue operating. The surveillance court that oversees FISA issued new annual certifications for the program in March, meaning the National Security Agency could continue to operate it until next spring — though such a scenario could invite legal challenges from the companies that the law requires to share communications data with the government.

Watch The Times. NYTimes.com/Video.



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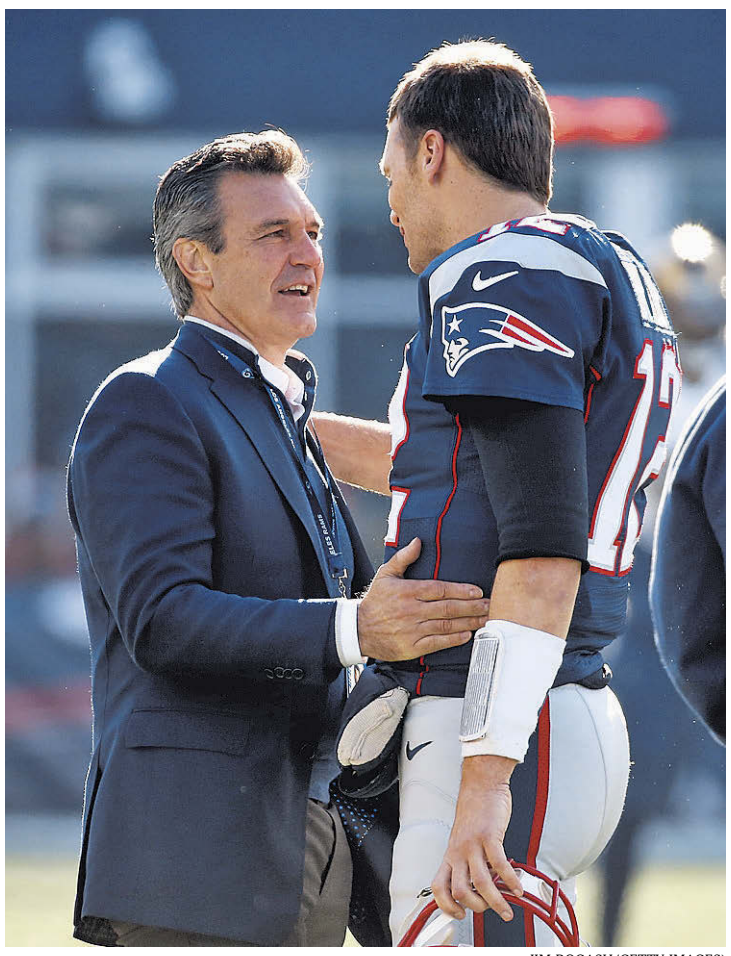


JIM ROGASH/GETTY IMAGES)

Conor McGregor after seriously fracturing his leg during a bout in 2021, and the well-known sports physician Neal ElAttrache, with Tom Brady in 2016, who oversaw the surgery to repair the injury.

Banned Substances Aid U.F.C. Star's Stunning Return From Injury

From Page A1

specialists in bone healing and "explained that I don't prescribe hormone or steroid treatment." He was referring to drugs banned by nearly all major sports because they help athletes build muscle far faster than the human body can by itself.

ElAttrache said that after McGregor saw a specialist, he wrote a letter supporting McGregor's application for a special exemption that would have allowed him to use performance-enhancing drugs without facing a penalty.

Officials overseeing the U.F.C.'s drug testing program believed that in seeking the exemption, McGregor — with the imprimatur of ElAttrache — was trying to exploit a loophole to use banned drugs, the two people said. It was the beginning of a split between the U.F.C. and the United States Anti-Doping Agency, known as USADA, the entity that was overseeing the U.F.C.'s drug testing program.

The exemption was never granted. McGregor quietly withdrew from the U.F.C.'s antidoping program, which meant he was no longer subject to drug testing. The speculation about McGregor peaked during this period, part of a two-year span during which he wasn't tested.

Having built a global fan base, the U.F.C. is a major force in the sports business. Last year, Paramount agreed to pay $7.7 billion over seven years for exclusive streaming and broadcast rights in the United States. And President Trump has strong ties with its chief executive, Dana White; their alliance will be plainly visible on the South Lawn on Sunday as the White House hosts fights to commemorate Mr. Trump's birthday and America's 250th birthday.

But the U.F.C.'s credibility depends, in part, on applying the rules equally, which is why competitors must submit to regular screening for performance-enhancing drugs to ensure fair fights.

McGregor, 37, is considered the most recognizable fighter in U.F.C. history. His rise to stardom, based on taunting opponents before matches and then knocking them out in the octagon, paralleled the explosion in growth of mixed martial arts.

In a written response to The Times's questions, McGregor's manager, Audie Attar, did not say whether McGregor had used performance-enhancing drugs. He said that "even with surgery there was a real risk Conor might not walk again, a high likelihood he would face numerous lifelong side effects that would limit his mobility and serious doubts he would ever return to the octagon."

Attar said McGregor withdrew from the U.F.C.'s drug-testing pool "to focus fully on his recovery" under the care of "his team of world-renowned physicians."

"They oversaw a combination of a gruesome surgery, intense physical therapy and appropriately prescribed medicines," Attar said. "It is an unfathomable breach of health and privacy protections that my client's purported personal medical records would be disclosed."

The U.F.C.'s chief business officer, Hunter Campbell, also did not directly address whether McGregor used performance-enhancing drugs. He said McGregor "maintained proper communication with our team" and remained "in full compliance with the rules of our comprehensive drug program."

Over the past two decades, ElAttrache has cultivated an image as a medical savant who can repair the shoulders, the knees and the broken bones of elite athletes and Hollywood stars. Tom Brady, Shohei Ohtani and Leonardo DiCaprio have all been surgical patients. ElAttrache operated on, treated or examined 18 of the 29 baseball players who won the Cy Young or Most Valuable Player Awards in the last 10 years.

On Thursday, after this article was published online, investigators for Major League Baseball were making plans to question ElAttrache about why he backed McGregor's use of the banned drugs, according to two people briefed on the matter.

Before McGregor's 2021 match, ElAttrache, who had also operated on McGregor in 2013, diagnosed him with a bone bruise in his left leg.

ElAttrache was sitting just outside the octagon in Las Vegas when McGregor, then 32, broke the same leg during his bout with Dustin Poirier. The next day, in Los Angeles, ElAttrache assisted an orthopedic trauma surgeon as they repaired a complex fracture of McGregor's tibia and fibula by inserting a rod, plates and screws into his leg.

In his exchange of texts with The Times, ElAttrache said that after the surgery he was concerned that McGregor's bones would fuse slowly or not at all.

"I felt it would be appropriate to consult other physicians with expertise in bone healing/bone metabolism," ElAttrache said. "I recommended the consultations but not the course of treatment."

ElAttrache said he had told McGregor he should check with U.F.C.'s drug testers about whatever prescriptions the consultant gave him.

"I purposely wasn't involved with his evaluation by the consultant nor with prescribing medication," ElAttrache said.

ElAttrache said the "expert opinions" McGregor received had showed "he could optimize his chance of solid union and healing of his fractures and decrease the chances that he would be left with incompletely healed fracture lines."

ElAttrache said he had then written a letter supporting McGregor's application for what is known as a therapeutic use exemption that would permit him to use banned substances. He said he had based his support on science, but he declined to cite what research endorsed the use of performance-enhancing drugs to heal a broken bone.

Ten sports doctors, antidoping experts, sports officials and trauma surgeons interviewed by The Times said they knew of no example of a professional athlete who had ever been granted a special exemption to use a performance-enhancing drug for that purpose. They said they were surprised to hear that ElAttrache had endorsed something antidoping officials would almost certainly question.

Many of the experts spoke on the condition of anonymity because they feared publicly criticizing ElAttrache and did not want to be identified discussing matters related to banned drugs.

When asked by The Times why he believed it was appropriate for McGregor to take banned drugs, ElAttrache defended athletes' need to obtain therapeutic use exemptions.

"You are acting as if 'banned drugs' are somehow 'illegal drugs' or that they have no legitimate therapeutic use and only have performance enhancement use," ElAttrache said. "There are many 'banned drugs' on the list which are necessary to medically treat various conditions which occur in people. That is why a therapeutic use exemption application exists."

Because athletes in Major League Baseball, the Olympics and the U.F.C. have tried to exploit these exemptions to use banned drugs, antidoping officials have set a high bar for granting them. Athletes must prove that they have an acute or chronic medically diagnosed condition and must show there are no other reasonable alternatives for treating it.

Therapeutic use exemptions are intended for athletes with conditions like attention deficit disorder, asthma and testicular cancer, which may require drugs to make up for a deficiency in the body, according to Dr. David Gerrard, a physician, antidoping expert and former Olympian. Gerrard helped the World Anti-Doping Agency create the standards for Olympic athletes to receive the exemptions. Before granting one, he said, antidoping officials must be sure that the substance will not provide additional performance enhancement, like helping the athlete bulk up.

Dr. Gerrard said he had reviewed thousands of applications for therapeutic use exemptions in his 25 years working in antidoping.

"I could not recall ever seeing a case or agreeing to any performance-enhancing drug to help heal a broken bone," he said, adding, "I cannot think of any banned substance that's proven to help heal bones."

Dr. Jason Lowe, a trauma surgeon in Arizona, said that surgeons would sometimes refer an orthopedic patient to a bone health specialist like an endocrinologist or rheumatologist to determine whether the patient has a condition that could slow healing. The specialists occasionally identify a deficiency, like low levels of vitamin D. In rare cases, they will identify a hormone deficiency that can be treated with a drug banned in some sports.

McGregor's request for permission to take banned drugs caused complications for USADA, which is best known for policing drug use in American Olympians. The U.F.C. had hired the agency in 2015 to oversee its antidoping program as part of efforts to clean up its image with the public and with broadcasters investing in U.F.C. events.

(USADA declined to answer questions about McGregor and ElAttrache.)

As an active U.F.C. fighter, McGregor was in a pool of athletes required to provide urine and blood tests to USADA.

Fighters who retire or no longer compete for the U.F.C. may leave the testing pool. But even as McGregor was saying publicly that he would be returning to the octagon, he quietly came out of the pool.

In 2022, close followers of the U.F.C. noticed that USADA's website, which tracks when athletes are tested for drugs, showed that McGregor had not been tested since around the time of his fight the previous July.

Photos of McGregor posted on social media showed that he had bulked up, leading to speculation that he was using steroids or another powerful performance-enhancing drug. That November, another fighter publicly implied that McGregor had left the testing pool so he could dope.

"There's only one reason you would do that," the fighter, Anthony Smith, said. "You keep seeing videos of him flexing in front of mirrors and screaming, and he's huge. He's healed really fast. Like, really fast."

Replying on X, McGregor called Smith a "loser" and said he'd had no choice but to take extreme measures to heal.

"When a serious injury with a high % of never recovering occurs, it is just simply not the same," he wrote.

"The % of the bones joining back after a break like this is so low," he wrote in a post that has since been deleted.

He continued: "Everything was fully disclosed before I began. The state of allowance for athletes to recover from injuries as horrific as the one I overcame must be assessed."

McGregor did not say who was treating him, what had been disclosed or to whom.

That December, Rogan, the podcaster and U.F.C. commentator, pointed out on his show that McGregor was "taking his shirt off and posing constantly" and looked as if his urine "would melt that USADA cup."

"The weird thing is that there's a loophole in USADA that allows you to get out of the testing pool," he added. "You could just juice up."

During the next year, tensions between the U.F.C. and USADA grew.

White, the U.F.C. chief, repeatedly hinted that McGregor would soon be ready to fight. In July 2023, he said he expected him to return by the end of the year. The next month, a mixed martial arts veteran, Michael Chandler, said he wanted to fight McGregor within that time period.

But under USADA rules, fighters had to be back in the testing pool for six months before they were allowed to fight. This provided enough time for the agency to ensure that a fighter was not taking drugs before a bout. It also meant that there wasn't enough time for McGregor to rejoin the testing pool and fight before year's end.

USADA told the U.F.C. that if it allowed McGregor to fight anyway, the relationship between the two organizations would be over, according to the two people familiar with the matter.

To re-enter the testing pool, Mr. McGregor had to disclose any banned substances he may have taken. Athletes are encouraged to do this because if they test positive for those drugs — and have disclosed them — they cannot be sanctioned. During that process, officials learned that McGregor had indeed taken banned drugs while outside the pool, according to the two people.

McGregor officially re-entered the testing pool on Oct. 8, 2023.

That day, the U.F.C. told USADA that it did not plan to renew its contract when it expired on Dec. 31, 2023. Travis Tygart, USADA's chief executive, announced that USADA would no longer be involved in the U.F.C. antidoping program.

"The relationship between USADA and U.F.C. became untenable given the statements made by U.F.C. leaders and others questioning USADA's principled stance that McGregor not be allowed to fight" without six months of testing, Tygart said.

At a news conference, U.F.C. executives called Tygart's statement "garbage" and implied that he was lying, saying the U.F.C. had parted with USADA because the agency managed the program poorly, not because of McGregor.

During the news conference, the U.F.C. officials, Campbell and Jeff Novitzky, laid out a scenario that appeared similar to McGregor's situation.

Campbell posed a hypothetical in which an athlete who had been out of competitions for a year took substances "for 10 days under the supervision of the best surgeon in the world." He added: "My question is, does he gain any performance-enhancing benefit by the time he returns to competition? If the answer is no, and he doesn't retain any, and it helped him recover faster, I'm open to that conversation with the best experts in the world. To just blanketly say absolutely not, that's ignorant."

Novitzky also addressed the issue.

"So take, for instance, if you have world-class surgeons and physicians saying, 'Look, when my next-door neighbor, or my wife, or my kid, has this injury, you know, in the initial healing stages of this injury, I'm giving them these prohibited substances to help them heal,'" Novitzky said. "And then we're looking at a scenario where you're going to withhold that from a high-level athlete."

With the U.F.C. now overseeing its own drug testing program, McGregor was again subject to testing. Six months after the news conference, the U.F.C. announced that he and Chandler would fight on June 29, 2024, only to cancel the event when McGregor broke a pinkie toe.

The same day that the U.F.C. announced that the fight was off, drug testers tried to find McGregor to administer an antidoping test but were unable to locate him. In September, McGregor missed two more tests.

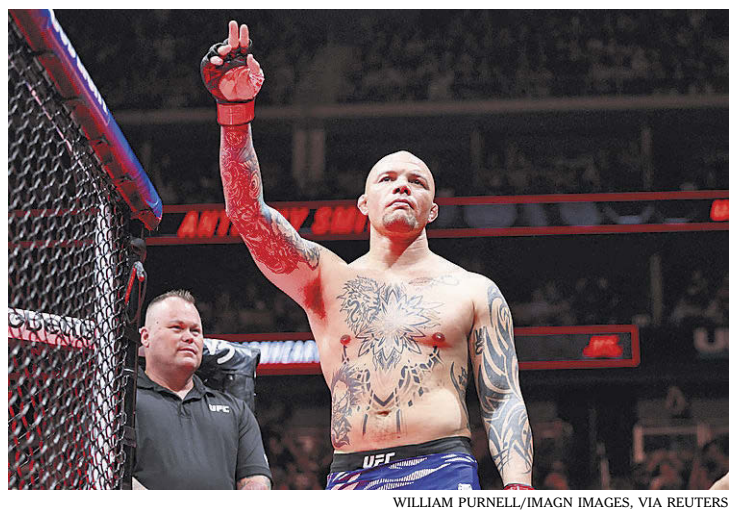
In October 2025, the U.F.C. suspended him for 18 months for violating its testing rules. In announcing the penalty, the U.F.C. said it had reduced McGregor's suspension to 18 months from 24 months in part because he was recovering from an injury.

The suspension was backdated and is set to expire this month, in time for McGregor's July fight in Las Vegas — the same city where he sustained the broken leg in 2021.

JASON ANDREW FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

McGregor arrives at Washington's Riggs Hotel for the Uber X inauguration party in 2025.

ERIC LEE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



WILLIAM PURNELL/IMAGN IMAGES, VIA REUTERS

Travis Tygart, head of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, cut ties with U.F.C. The U.F.C. fighter Anthony Smith implied McGregor had been doping. Replying on X, McGregor called Smith a "loser."

Path back led to a famous doctor and bone healing drugs.

Research was contributed by Sheelagh McNeill, Kristen Noyes, Matthew Cullen, Susan Beachy, Kitty Bennett and Nina Agrawal.

2026 Election

Cornyn Says Trump Faces A 'Miserable' Final 2 Years

Senator Flexes His New Political Freedom

By CARL HULSE

WASHINGTON — Senator John Cornyn was not consoled when President Trump professed on social media that the senior Republican from Texas would "remain my friend for a long time to come" after the president had enthusiastically endorsed the man who defeated Mr. Cornyn, ending his Senate career.

"If that's the way friends treat you, you wonder about his enemies," Mr. Cornyn said this week in his first extensive interview since his loss two weeks ago to Attorney General Ken Paxton of Texas, an opponent Mr. Cornyn labeled corrupt and unfit for the Senate.

Mr. Cornyn said he had come to terms with his defeat, a stinging loss he attributed in part to public disillusionment with extreme partisan politics that led to low voter turnout. Now the Trump administration might find itself having to come to terms with Mr. Cornyn as he flexes new political freedom, joining a handful of other Senate Republicans not seeking re-election or defeated in primaries at Mr. Trump's behest who now have added room to maneuver.

"I think it is going to be a pretty bumpy ride for the next seven months," Mr. Cornyn said during a wide-ranging conversation in his Capitol office as he reflected on the tumultuous Texas election and his nearly quarter-century in Washington.

"It does give some of us a little more freedom, and certainly leverage," he said, before invoking Mr. Trump's notoriously heated Oval Office meeting with President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine last year. "As the president told President Zelensky when he was in his office a year or so ago — he said, 'You don't have any cards.' Well, we've got some cards to play."

Mr. Cornyn said he was not a "wounded bear" seeking retribution. He is determined that Republicans hold the Senate because he said he feared they would lose the House in November.

But in the interview, he gave voice in starkly candid terms to a growing sentiment among Senate Republicans that Mr. Trump was hurting his own party with self-serving decisions and his insistence on "slavish" loyalty, ultimately setting himself up for a midterm "disaster" that would pave the way for "the most miserable two years of his life."

And in the interim, Mr. Cornyn said, he reserves the right to choose "where I'm going to — or going to not — defer" to Mr. Trump.

One of those areas appears to be the special protection from I.R.S. scrutiny that the Justice Department granted Mr. Trump and his family and businesses as part of a settlement of a lawsuit over the leak of his tax data, an exemption Mr. Cornyn said needed to be overturned.

"I think that's a terrible mistake," Mr. Cornyn said. "The president needs to be treated like everybody else."

Mr. Cornyn did not elaborate on how he would seek to reverse the deal. And unlike Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, another Republican ousted in a primary by a Trump-backed challenger, he has yet to break with Mr. Trump on a major vote since his defeat. But he made it clear that he found the settlement unacceptable.

He attributed Mr. Trump's election in part to a backlash against allegations of self-dealing in the prior administration. "To me, the message by the voter was, 'We don't like this,'" he said. "We can't replace one form of self-dealing and corruption with another."

Mr. Cornyn, who was first elected to the Senate in 2002, knew he was going to face a difficult re-election when Mr. Paxton, a MAGA darling and Trump loyalist with a string of political and personal scandals, entered the race against him. But the more institutionalist incumbent, who came up just short of being elected majority leader after the 2024 elections, was always seen as a safer — and less expensive — general election bet than the tarnished Mr. Paxton.

The prospect of Mr. Trump's endorsement loomed large in the race, and the Cornyn camp and his allies in the Senate pushed to secure Mr. Trump's backing — or at minimum prevent the president from endorsing Mr. Paxton. Mr. Cornyn even brought on campaign operatives with strong ties to Mr. Trump.

But the fact that Mr. Cornyn in 2023 had expressed some misgivings about Mr. Trump running for re-election — fairly mild comments compared with some other Republicans — provided a line of attack against him by Mr. Paxton and lingered with the president.

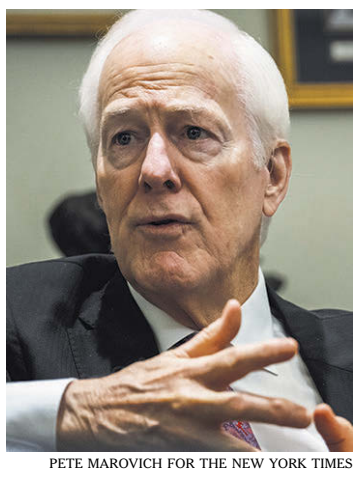
Then, after trailing in public polls, Mr. Cornyn finished a somewhat surprising first in the initial round of voting. For a moment, it seemed that Mr. Trump, in his desire to back winners, might endorse Mr. Cornyn. But he held off.

Mr. Paxton then made what was viewed by all sides as a shrewd move: He said he would consider dropping out of the race if Senate Republicans eliminated the filibuster and passed new voting restrictions that have been a top priority of the president to try to limit midterm losses. Senate Republicans were never going to do so, though Mr. Cornyn did drop his longstanding defense of the filibuster. But the gambit seemed to reinforce Mr. Trump's frustration with Senate Republicans, and he stayed on the sidelines as the brutal race played out in Texas.

"I had really thought that we'd gone on so long with no endorsement that he was just going to stay out of it," Mr. Cornyn said. "But he couldn't resist."

On May 19, as early voting in the runoff was underway, Mr. Trump gave his public blessing to Mr. Paxton, calling him a "true MAGA warrior." In the Senate, where Republicans had balked at gutting the filibuster and were raising objections to funding the president's ballroom project, the endorsement was seen as much as a slap at them as at Mr. Cornyn. It provided a late surge for the challenger, particularly when such a small segment of voters was going to turn out in a primary runoff the day after Memorial Day.

"These are the devoted MAGA supporters, and when they saw what President Trump said when



PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Senator John Cornyn of Texas was spurned by the president despite being an ardent backer.

he said it, I think it no doubt had an influence," Mr. Cornyn said. "I do think the most important factor was just the small turnout, but certainly the president's endorsement had an impact."

Mr. Cornyn believes that impact will reach far beyond his race. He is the epitome of a reliable conservative with what he listed as his "99.3 percent" voting record in line with the president. Unlike Mr. Cassidy of Louisiana, he did not vote to remove Mr. Trump from office after the Jan. 6, 2021, assault on the Capitol by Trump supporters. Still, he said, the president threw him under the bus.

"If he would do that to me, he would do that to anybody," Mr. Cornyn said. "There's never going to be good enough for him, other than 100 percent, you know, slavish adherence to whatever he wants. But obviously that's not what the senator's role is supposed to be, especially in terms of checks and balances."

Mr. Cornyn stood by his attacks on Mr. Paxton and said that while he supported the party ticket, he would not campaign or raise money for his primary opponent — a loss for Mr. Paxton since Mr. Cornyn was a prodigious fundraiser. But he fears Republicans are in for a rough midterm and Mr. Trump for a difficult final two years, in part because of self-inflicted wounds such the president's endorsement of Mr. Paxton putting the Texas seat at risk.

"It's going to make things harder, certainly more expensive in Texas, and make it harder around the country," Mr. Cornyn said, predicting that Mr. Trump would come to regret his actions. "I don't say that with any sort of desire for vengeance; I just think that's the way it's going to be. He's going to have the most miserable two years of his life in the last two years of his term, I think, because I think November is going to be a disaster."

As for himself, Mr. Cornyn is looking ahead to his remaining months in his office and life outside the Senate.

"I am going to continue to look for opportunities to make this next seven months as productive as possible," he said, suggesting there could be positive aspects to his loss. "I've always said that former senators look happier, healthier, and they're certainly more prosperous. So, I'm kind of, like, looking forward to what comes next."

SOPHIE PARK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

David Morales, running for mayor of Providence, R.I., has made housing central to his pitch for "a city all our neighbors can afford."

For Young Candidates, Housing Cost Is Personal

From Page A1

As both political parties look for generational change, these candidates believe they have both an issue and their birth dates on their side. And they defy the usual politics. They include Republicans who argue against local control where cities and towns have made it hard to build new homes, and Democrats who argue for lower property taxes and less red tape on developers.

"My friends and colleagues that are scattered around the state, they don't reach out to me on the hot-button issues," such as immigration raids in Minneapolis, said Spencer Igo, a 30-year-old Republican state representative in Minnesota. "They reach out to me to say, 'Spence, what are you doing about housing, because we can't afford it.'"

Affordability politics dominate the midterm election debate, and polls show that housing is voters' top affordability concern. Housing shortages hit across age groups, but they hit differently. Young renters who have managed to save for a down payment are staying in their rentals because they can't find homes to buy. That is often because older homeowners have remained in the houses they bought as young adults, because they can't find a place to downsize to or don't want to swap low, fixed-rate mortgages for the higher-interest loans now on offer.

Opponents of the housing policies embraced by the younger generation argue — as Mr. Smiley, the Providence mayor, does — that rent caps scare off developers of new buildings, only adding to housing shortages. Getting rid of existing zoning laws will increase traffic and density, changing the character of established neighborhoods and driving down real estate values, older political figures say.

But to the younger generation, the housing squeeze is personal, and so is the policy response. While most lawmakers are homeowners — 80 percent, by one count — the youngest politicians are often renters, like the vast majority of Americans under 35. Others still live with their parents, or say their young lives were shaped by seeing their families lose their homes in the financial crisis of 2008.

"For people like me, this is deeply personal," said Manny Rutinel, a Democratic state legislator who is running for Congress in Colorado.

At 31, he is on the older side of the new cohort of Gen Z and young millennial candidates. Raised by a single mother, he recalled as a teenager watching her open the letter saying their house was in foreclosure.

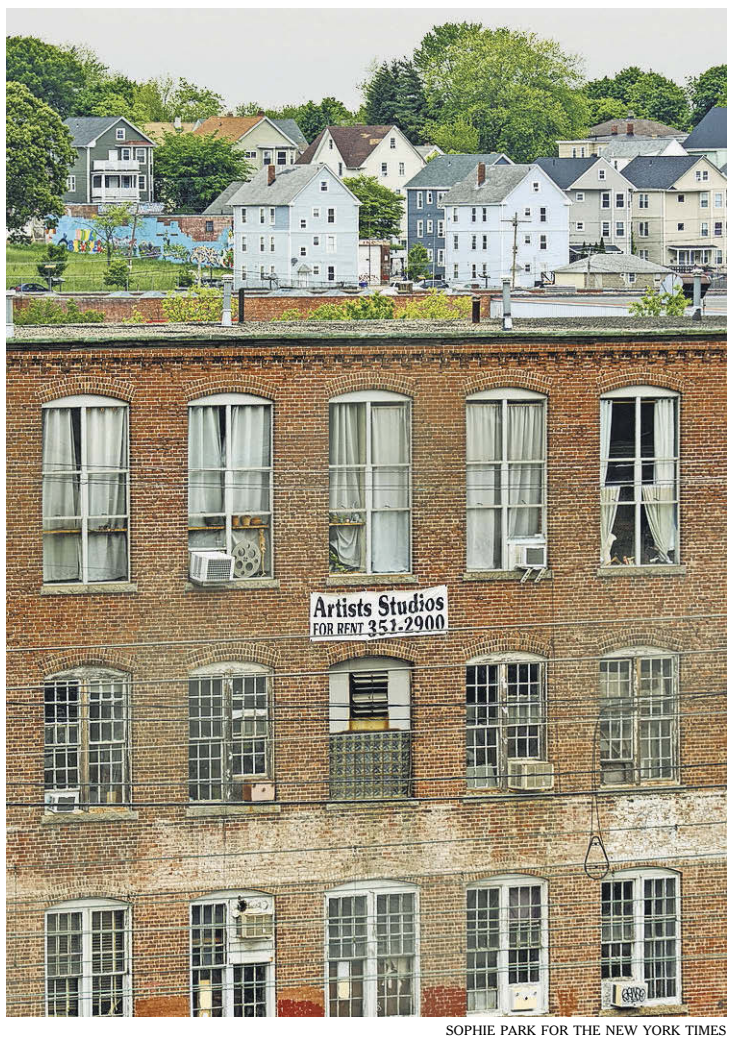
His rent, he said, has been rising 15 percent a year.

"We need people who understand this issue in their bones," he said.

Burhan Azeem, 29 years old and running for State Senate in Massachusetts, kicked off his campaign with a video extolling the state's legacy of government-sponsored building: the first public schools, the first underground trains.

"Massachusetts is a great place to live," he says, looking into the camera, "that no one can afford."

A campaign video for Olaleye Onikuyide, 28 and running for the Connecticut House of Representatives from the suburbs of Hartford, features him urging the passage of a "Golden Girls" law, similar to one that Mr. Rutinel sponsored in Colorado, that allows homeowners to rent out up to three bedrooms to nonrelatives.



SOPHIE PARK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A rental ad in Providence. Critics say policies like rent caps scare off developers of new buildings, adding to housing shortages.

ZAK JOKELA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

State Representative Katie Zolnikov of Montana, a Republican, helped sponsor legislation to eliminate some building limits.

'We need people who understand this issue in their bones.'

MANNY RUTINEL, Democratic state legislator who is running for Congress in Colorado

He had to explain to his social media director why he wanted to use the theme song from the sitcom of the same name, which went off the air before either of them was born.

Some of the young candidates are democratic socialists who take inspiration from Mayors Zohran Mamdani in New York and Katie Wilson in Seattle, who campaigned on capping rents. But their platforms go beyond "The Rent is Too Damn High," as an erstwhile political party in New York once had it.

"We can freeze the rent today, but we'll still need 200,000 new homes tomorrow," said Juliana Bennett, a 26-year-old Democrat on the City Council in Madison, Wis., who is running for State Assembly.

Policy debates on housing tend to divide along generational rather than partisan lines.

"When I talk with my older colleagues who have been in their homes 20 or 30 years, they say, I remember buying my home for $60,000 in 1992," Mr. Igo said. "I say: I understand that, but I want you to go on Zillow and look in the communities you represent and tell me if someone a few years out of college making $60,000 a year is going to be able to afford a home in your community."

Many of the policies supported by younger politicians aim to create more homes in the "missing middle" between single-family houses and large apartment buildings. That means eliminating old zoning laws that dictate minimum lot sizes and the number of parking spaces per unit.

The young officeseekers also target regulations that prevent residential units in commercial zones or the construction of townhouses, duplexes, smaller multifamily buildings and backyard accessory dwelling units — what used to be known as mother-in-law apartments.

Mr. Azeem first ran for Cambridge City Council as an undergraduate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology because he could not understand why the council had rejected a proposal to allow the construction of three-story multifamily buildings. The city's landscape had long been defined by triple-deckers, but zoning laws made it illegal to build new ones, or anything but single-family homes, in many neighborhoods.

He was elected in 2021 and helped eliminate those laws and pass new ones allowing four-story multifamily buildings, with a percentage set aside for low- and moderate-income housing. The city expects to build more than 3,500 new units over the next 15 years, 10 times the number expected under the old zoning laws.

Mr. Azeem also helped put a "starter home" measure on the state ballot in November that would require cities and towns to allow single-family homes on lots of 5,000 square feet or more. It would override laws that allow homes only on larger parcels — one-half to two acres, or 21,780 to 87,120 square feet — in much of the state.

In Montana, where an influx of residents during the Covid-19 pandemic caused real estate prices to spike, State Representative Katie Zolnikov, a 28-year-old Republican who owns an ice cream shop, helped sponsor a package of laws that has been called the Montana Miracle.

Among other changes, it eliminated rental application fees and minimum parking mandates on new housing, and required cities with 5,000 residents or more to allow new residential units in commercial areas, and duplexes on any lot.

"I'm more willing to question it," she said. "Why do we have parking mandates? Why do we have a housing shortage? And if you want to ask the larger question, why is everyone so lonely?"

Many of the youngest politicians embrace what has been called the housing theory of everything, which argues not only that housing shortages are at the root of social crises like income inequality and homelessness, but that where you live dictates everything else about your life: where you work, how much time and money you can afford for fun, whether you can start a family.

"People my age feel rudderless," said Mr. Onikuyide, the assembly candidate in Connecticut, who lives with his parents. "We are maybe the first generation in recent times that is better educated but worse off than our parents. The economy is incredibly volatile, we can't find jobs, we're sending résumés into A.I.-fueled black holes, you drive home in traffic to you and your parents' house, you're not seeing your friends as much."

He paraphrased a joke among young housing-affordability activists online: "Do you really miss college, or do you just miss living in a walkable community with housing where you get to see your friends every day?"

2026 Election

CONGRESSIONAL MEMO

Mace Is Latest Rabble-Rouser to Exit

By ANNIE KARNI

ERIC LEE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Representative Nancy Mace, Republican of South Carolina, racked up viral social media moments.

Few tears were shed on Capitol Hill on Wednesday for Representative Nancy Mace of South Carolina, after she finished an embarrassing fifth in the Republican primary for governor.

"Thoughts and prayers," wrote Representative Sarah McBride of Delaware, the first openly transgender member of Congress whom Ms. Mace tormented by barring her from using women's bathrooms on Capitol Hill. Many of her Republican colleagues shared the sentiment, though not publicly.

After all, Ms. Mace, the shape-shifting onetime moderate who made a full-blown turn toward Trumpism, had spent her five years on Capitol Hill performing one attention-grabbing stunt after another — she once paraded through the Capitol wearing a tight white tank top with a scarlet "A" emblazoned over her chest — offending and alienating people in both parties along the way.

Ms. Mace had one Trumpian view of politics that was immutable, and which has come to be shared by a certain set of her colleagues who quickly established themselves as flamboyant fixtures on Capitol Hill: that notoriety of any type can translate into power, and if people know your name and see your viral clips they will believe you are important.

Voters knew Ms. Mace's name and unequivocally rejected her. But she was not the only House member who tried using the committee rooms and the chamber floor as platforms for viral moments that could be transformed into huge followings on social media, fund-raising dollars and fame.

Many of those showboats who proved to be naturals at this mode of politicking will be gone from the corridors of power in Washington next year, making the place possibly more functional, but also less colorful and noisy — until a new crop of lawmakers finds its footing and takes up the attention-seeking mantle.

Gone from under the dome next year will be Representative Jasmine Crockett, the firebrand Democrat from Texas, who famously coined the "bleach-blonde, bad-built butch body" moniker for former Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia during a late-night hearing of the Oversight Committee. (The subject of the session was quickly lost to history amid the shock of two rabble-rousing congresswomen reveling in personal insults.) Ms. Crockett lost the Democratic Senate primary earlier this year to James Talarico.

Ms. Greene, perhaps the biggest rabble-rouser of all, ejected herself from Congress early, resigning in January, days after Mr. Trump branded his former ally a "traitor" for breaking with him and helping compel the Justice Department to release its files related to Jeffrey Epstein, the convicted sex offender.

Ms. Greene could generate entire news cycles all by herself, both when she was a die-hard MAGA loyalist trafficking in conspiracy theories and later, after she broke hard and permanently with Mr. Trump over a variety of issues. (In her later, arguably more mature iteration, Ms. Greene said she regretted believing some of the QAnon conspiracy theories she once echoed, stating on the House floor that "school shootings are absolutely real," and that the 9/11 attacks "absolutely happened.")

Representative Jasmine Crockett, Democrat of Texas, lost to James Talarico.

Gone, too, will be Representative Al Green, Democrat of Texas, the outspoken, cane-waving septuagenarian who twice got booted from presidential addresses at the Capitol for shouting and waving unapproved signs. After losing his Democratic primary earlier this month, Mr. Green will no longer be around to file articles of impeachment against President Trump, as he has done repeatedly, prompting eyerolls among colleagues who generally viewed them as an unhelpful distraction. And the State of the Union address will be missing one of its more reliable hecklers.

Representative Chip Roy, Republican of Texas, whose shouty floor speeches criticizing members of his own party — and Congress as a whole — made for delicious clips for cable news viewers who enjoy lapping up Republican-on-Republican violence, also lost his statewide race for attorney general last month. And with that, the Republican Conference will lose one of its most maddening holdouts on key votes, and reporters will be deprived of one of the more reliable quote generators who routinely says the quiet part out loud.

"At some point, people will look at this body and say maybe we should get rid of all 435 members of the House, and all 100 members of the Senate, and start over, because Congress is literally failing the American people," Mr. Roy said earlier this year.

Clipped and saved.

Then there were those who stood out for different reasons, but still enjoyed basking in the spotlight, and whose departures will leave a gaping hole in the fabric of Congress.

Representative Thomas Massie, Republican of Kentucky, the raw milk-guzzling libertarian who wears a digital federal debt clock he made himself on his lapel, won't be returning to Washington next year after losing his primary to a Trump-backed challenger. Unlike Ms. Mace, Mr. Massie generally attracted attention because he was the rare Republican with a core set of beliefs on which he would not compromise, regardless of the political consequences. That ultimately caught up with him.

The House will still have its fair share of flashy personalities.

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the New York Democrat and progressive standout, is expected to easily win re-election in November and return next year amid speculation about whether she will seek a Senate seat or have a go at the presidency.

Despite being a new target of Mr. Trump's ire, Representative Lauren Boebert, the Colorado Republican who was caught on a security camera in 2023 vaping and groping her date during a performance of the musical "Beetlejuice," is seen as relatively safe in her re-election campaign, barring an upset.

And those who are gone are likely to simply look elsewhere for a platform where they can continue vying for attention. Ms. Greene, for instance, earlier this week announced a new online series, "Life with MTG," which is expected to include political conversations and lifestyle segments.

Ms. Mace was already back online on Wednesday morning, acknowledging her defeat and jumping into the next fight — this time with Graham Platner, the embattled Democratic nominee for Senate in Maine, who if he wins could help fill the character void on the Hill.

"Enjoying my first cup of coffee since getting my ass kicked last night," Ms. Mace wrote on social media, "and reading about how Dems nominated the guy with the nazi tattoo."

Rule Blocks Mail Ballots If States Keep Voter Data

By ADAM SELLA and NICK CORASANITI

The U.S. Postal Service has proposed a new rule that would allow it to refuse to deliver mail ballots in states that don't turn over voter rolls to the federal government.

The rule, proposed last week, is vaguely written but appears to establish broad authority for the agency to intervene in the mail voting process. It calls on states to compile lists of mail voters that Postal Service employees would use to screen ballots for eligibility. If states refuse to comply, the agency could refuse to send their mail ballots.

Democrats and voting-rights groups say the proposed rule is clear evidence that the administration is trying to unconstitutionally intrude on state-run elections.

Withholding some mail services in states where voters rely heavily on mail balloting could affect millions of Americans. And most of those affected would likely be Democrats, who disproportionately vote by mail because more Republicans have been convinced by Mr. Trump's unfounded claims that mail balloting is not reliable and invites fraud. Screening mail ballots for voter eligibility, meanwhile, would be an unprecedented, and potentially unconstitutional, involvement of the federal government in the administration of elections. The proposed rule is vague, however, so it is unclear how the screening would work.

Democrats call a new U.S.P.S. proposal unconstitutional.

In recent oral arguments before a federal judge in Boston, a coalition of Democratic state attorneys general and multiple voting rights groups said the rule amounts to a federal intrusion into the voting process, which the Constitution dictates is the domain of the states. They also argued that it would be expensive, cumbersome and chaotic to comply with the demand to create new lists of voters and, in some cases, to change mail ballot designs, with fewer than 150 days until the 2026 election.

"It's just difficult to overstate the disruption that this will cause to election administration," said Michael Cohen, the deputy attorney general in California, who was speaking on behalf of a broad coalition of states in federal court last week.

The rule is consistent with an executive order Mr. Trump signed in March effectively instructing the Postal Service not to deliver election mail unless states comply with other aspects of the president's order, including handing over the voter lists.

Postal experts said the order also threatens the service's independence. Anton Hajjar, a former member of the Postal Service Board of Governors, said his main concern is that Mr. Trump's order amounts to "political interference with the U.S.P.S., which by law is supposed to be independent."

The service, whose precursor predates the United States' independence, was codified by Congress and signed into law in 1792 by President George Washington. The founders considered the service an essential pillar of the young country's democracy that would protect the uncensored and affordable exchange of ideas. Congress passed another law in 1970 that converted the service to an independent federal agency.

The proposed rule is currently open for a 30-day comment period. The executive order calls on the Postal Service to issue a final rule by the end of July.

The proposal is in line with repeated attempts by Mr. Trump and his Republican allies to take over critical parts of the electoral process in the run-up to a challenging midterm election cycle for their party. The president's first attempted executive order on elections, which he signed last year and included a requirement for documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote, was blocked by courts. His signature legislation in Congress, which would have restricted mail voting and added similar citizenship requirements, stalled after a Democratic filibuster in the Senate.

There are vanishingly few instances of illegal noncitizen voting. Democrats have repeatedly accused Mr. Trump of trying to give Republicans an electoral advantage in the name of improving security. He has not denied it. At a gathering of Republican lawmakers in March, he framed support for legislation that would in part crack down on mail voting as a way to hold the G.O.P. majority.

"It'll guarantee the midterms," he told them, warning that failure would bring "big trouble."

The president has also tried to insulate against Republican losses in the midterms by igniting a nationwide redistricting war to draw new, safely partisan congressional seats before the midterms. And he has repeatedly, falsely castigated the slow voting process in California's primary earlier this month as fraudulent, a preview of what he might do in the general election. Without offering evidence, the Justice Department has promised to bring charges of election fraud in the state.

Democrats argued that the executive order signed in March was unconstitutional, and multiple lawsuits were filed within days. But Judge Carl J. Nichols ruled in late May that it was premature for the court to intervene. He cited the fact that the Trump administration had yet to carry out much of the order, meaning that any potential harm caused to states or voters was still theoretical.

"The court recognizes that the Postal Service may ultimately issue a final rule that directly affects plaintiffs or their members, or that the government may develop state citizenship lists that omit specific individuals due to particularized flaws," he wrote. "Plaintiffs may, of course, renew their motions if and when those future actions occur."

Although the Postal Service has not yet issued what the judge called a "final" rule, Democrats pointed in court last week to both the agency's proposed rule and the directive in the executive order to create citizenship lists at the Department of Homeland Security as evidence that the order is being implemented and causing harm.

Both the Postal Service proposal and the executive order show that states will "suffer real harm," Mr. Cohen said in federal court last week.

Lawyers from the Department of Justice defended both the proposed rule and the executive order, but also reiterated that many details regarding implementation had not yet been developed, making any litigation ill-timed.

"There remain significant uncertainties, even within the federal government, about how and to what extent the executive order will be implemented," Stephen M. Pezzi, a lawyer for the Department of Justice, said in court.

The rule offers little explanation for how the Postal Service would screen those ballots. One uncertainty is whether there is a plan for merging the citizenship lists that Homeland Security has been ordered to create with the mail-voter lists required of the states. The president's executive order said the Homeland Security lists would be transmitted to the states, but explained little else.

Earlier this year, Postmaster General David Steiner told The New York Times that the agency would have no part in determining who would be on such a list.

"We're not going to compile a list. I mean, we can't compile a list. That's not what our job is," Mr. Steiner said. He added: "We can only work off of a list that we are given, and then we deliver mail."

The Postal Service did not respond to a request for comment.

The 20-page proposed rule was posted on June 2 for public comment. The changes would not apply to primary elections or overseas and military voters.

The proposal also establishes standards for envelope design and tracking, many of which would fall on state and local election officials to carry out.

While the proposed rule says states would retain full control over who can vote by mail, it also makes clear that using the Postal Service to deliver that mail requires states to comply with the rule.

The Postal Service plans to use a "Mail-in and Absentee Participation List" to "facilitate law enforcement efforts," and plans to verify ballot mail against that list before it enters the Postal Service's mail stream. If there isn't a match, or if the envelope does not meet the new standards, the ballot will be rejected.

The proposal does not say how ballots en route to voters would be screened, but it does say they would be verified by Postal Service employees. Mail ballot verification, however, has long been the province of state election officials.

Meanwhile, screening and rejecting such mail for compliance before it enters the mail stream could create bottlenecks. The proposed rule says that if mail ballots are found to be noncompliant, they will be returned and would have to be amended before being resubmitted.

The service rarely returns mail, said William Hensley, a former election mail specialist at the Postal Service, but in this case the rule appears to indicate that the service may say "turn that truck around."

"And the consequence of that could be incredibly damaging for election officials and for voters," he said.

Trump's Nod Doesn't Ensure Clear Win in South Carolina

This article is by ***Eduardo Medina****,* ***Emily Cochrane*** *and* ***Nick Madigan****.*

MEG KINNARD/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette, above, whom President Trump endorsed, faces a runoff in the South Carolina governor race.

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Just under two weeks before the Republican primary for governor, Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette of South Carolina clinched what she had long worked for: an endorsement from President Trump.

But in a crowded field of ambitious conservatives who had similar platforms, that was not enough for an outright victory on Tuesday night. Ms. Evette will now face Alan Wilson, the state attorney general who has prioritized his messaging around affordability, in a runoff later this month, according to The Associated Press.

The second round, on June 23, pits a Trump-backed candidate against a popular attorney general in a state that voted for the president three times in the general election and was quick to embrace his Make America Great Again movement a decade ago. It will be another high-profile test of Mr. Trump's political sway, which has had mixed results in races elsewhere in the country.

In South Carolina, voters appeared to be more concerned about who could steer their state and its ballooning population through infrastructure troubles and rising costs. And in interviews, they made a distinction between state and federal leadership. At Ms. Evette's watch party on Tuesday night, one of the loudest cheers from the audience came after her pledge to fix roads.

As of Tuesday night, her portion of the vote hovered just below 30 percent. Mr. Wilson was not far behind, with about 26 percent. South Carolina has elected only Republican governors since 2002, meaning the winner of the runoff is likely to become governor.

Ms. Evette said that Mr. Trump called her on Tuesday evening, telling her that "we are going to fight, and we are going to win this runoff" — a sentiment she echoed to supporters at the watch party in Greenville. And she was quick to take aim at Mr. Wilson, framing their runoff as a contest between "a Trump-endorsed businesswoman" and a "career politician who won't take a stand."

Mr. Wilson has also made his loyalty to the president abundantly clear. He has a "Trump Tough" section on his campaign website, and he frequently praised the president during appearances on the trail. But Ms. Evette had gone even further throughout her campaign, regularly sharing photos of herself with Mr. Trump in dispatches. Some voters believed she had gotten his support before it was actually official.

Representative Nancy Mace, whose political shape-shifting and name-calling earned her national notoriety, had also courted Trump supporters but fell short in her quest for the governorship. A second sitting member of the House, Ralph Norman, who belongs to the conservative House Freedom Caucus, also failed to make the runoff, as did Rom Reddy, a millionaire who had pitched himself as a political outsider.

Mr. Wilson wasted no time trying to win their support on Tuesday night, saying that his campaign "is your team" and adding that "I will fight for you and your family."

Mr. Reddy said at his watch party in Mount Pleasant on Tuesday night that he would not make an endorsement.

An Ohio-born businesswoman, Ms. Evette has served as lieutenant governor alongside Gov. Henry McMaster since 2019. Mr. McMaster, the state's longest-serving governor, cannot run again because of term limits. Ms. Evette has sought to present herself as the obvious successor to help manage the state's growth.

Mr. McMaster endorsed her, and the president suggested in his endorsement announcement that Ms. Evette tap the governor's son, Henry McMaster Jr., as her second in command.

That fueled backlash among Ms. Evette's opponents, who accused her of negotiating a backroom deal. Ms. Evette denied those claims and said she would not pick her running mate until after the primary. The younger Mr. McMaster later removed himself from consideration.

Mr. Wilson, a National Guard veteran, said in an interview this month that while South Carolinians love the president and his agenda, "they're not going to vote for someone simply because they were able to orchestrate an endorsement based on a deal."

The crowded primary became ugly and personal at times. But at least one losing candidate, Ms. Mace, said on Tuesday that she had "buried the hatchet" with Mr. Wilson as she endorsed him in the runoff.

"I want a law-and-order governor, and that law-and-order governor is going to be Alan Wilson," she told supporters at a watch party in Charleston.

Mr. Wilson, who had tussled with Ms. Mace early on in the campaign, asked her to help his prospective administration deal with cases involving accused sexual predators, she said. Ms. Mace, who has been open about being a trauma survivor, had been a key figure pushing for the release of the Epstein files.

She repeatedly suggested that she had lost Mr. Trump's support because of the Epstein files. On Tuesday night, she doubled down.

"I chose to expose the abusers of children and, apparently, I chose wrong if the goal was winning an election," she told supporters. "I'm at peace with that."

The winner of the runoff will face State Representative Jermaine Johnson, who clinched the Democratic nomination on Tuesday, according to The Associated Press.

Eduardo Medina reported from Charleston; Emily Cochrane from Greenville, S.C.; and Nick Madigan from Columbia, S.C. Tiffany Tan contributed reporting from Charleston.

Appeals Court Judge Blocks Alabama From Using Nitrogen Gas in Execution

By RICK ROJAS

A federal appeals court on Wednesday evening upheld a decision that blocked Alabama from using nitrogen gas in an execution scheduled for this week, forcing the state to turn to an alternate method if it is going to carry out the death penalty against Jeffery Lee, a convicted murderer.

Alabama officials had appealed a decision handed down on Tuesday by Judge Emily Marks of the Middle District of Alabama that prohibited the state from using a method known as nitrogen hypoxia in Mr. Lee's execution, which had been scheduled for Thursday. Judges from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit agreed with Judge Marks's ruling, calling nitrogen hypoxia a "likely unconstitutional method" for carrying out the death penalty.

The rulings have been the latest turns in the legal battle over Mr. Lee's fate and his efforts to avoid being put to death by nitrogen hypoxia, a method that has emerged in recent years as states have sought alternatives to lethal injection. In his legal challenge, Mr. Lee has even put forth a firing squad as an alternative that he believed would cause a quicker and less painful death.

Judge Marks had decided almost two weeks ago to let the state use nitrogen gas, finding that it "did not constitute cruel and unusual punishment." But the case was sent back to her after the appeals court disagreed.

The state had argued that it does not have a protocol in place for death by firing squad, much less legislative approval or "five expert marksmen willing and able to serve as executioners."

But this time, the judge agreed with Mr. Lee that if a firing squad executed him by aiming four .30-caliber bullets at his heart, he would be unconscious before his brain could register feelings of pain.

"Lee has shown that his proposed firing squad alternative significantly reduces a substantial risk of severe pain as compared to nitrogen hypoxia," Judge Marks wrote. "The result is that the State of Alabama cannot execute Lee by nitrogen hypoxia — no more, no less."

The decision does not block the state from executing Mr. Lee. Judge Marks, who was appointed by President Trump, noted in the decision that Alabama has two other approved methods: lethal injection and electrocution.

Mr. Lee's lawyers have called on Gov. Kay Ivey to intervene. "This execution is simply too flawed to move forward," they said in a statement on Wednesday.

The case could advance to the U.S. Supreme Court as Alabama officials have vowed to fight to move forward with Mr. Lee's execution, as well as affirm the constitutionality of using nitrogen gas in executions.

> *A murderer has said he would prefer death by firing squad.*

In a statement on Wednesday before the appeals court ruling, the governor's office said that Ms. Ivey, a Republican, was not planning to change course. "As Alabama continues to defend its execution protocol in the courts, the governor remains prepared to move forward with the planned execution," the statement said.

Mr. Lee's looming execution had already drawn scrutiny because he had been condemned through a practice, since abandoned, that allowed judges in Alabama to override the decision of juries in capital cases.

Mr. Lee, 49, had been convicted of killing two people during a pawnshop robbery in 1998. A jury voted to sentence him to life in prison without the possibility of parole, but the trial judge overruled its choice and sentenced him to death.

Alabama had been the last state to allow judges that power, known as judicial override, and they exercised it more than 100 times over four decades, according to a report by the Equal Justice Initiative. In an overwhelming majority of instances, the judges opted for the harsher sentence. Over the years, as many as 20 percent of the inmates on Alabama's death row had been sent there on sentences involving judicial override.

The state changed the law in 2017, but it did not apply retroactively.

Some, including prominent legal figures in Alabama, have argued that it was unfair to not reconsider death sentences that had been the result of judicial override in the past. Drayton Nabers Jr., the former chief justice of the State Supreme Court, called on Ms. Ivey to commute Mr. Lee's sentence.

"I believe in the Alabama death penalty," Justice Nabers wrote in an essay published recently by several news outlets in the state.

But "when a state concludes that a sentencing practice was unjust — unjust enough to abolish by statute — it ought to reckon with the sentences that practice produced," he added. "To say that the system was wrong going forward but that its past results must stand is not a principled position. It is an administrative convenience."

State officials are standing by the sentence.

"The people of Alabama have not forgotten Jimmy and Elaine," Attorney General Steve Marshall, a Republican, said in a statement, referring to the two people Mr. Lee was convicted of killing, Jimmy Ellis and Elaine Thompson. "I have not forgotten them. Anything short of carrying out the sentence imposed by the court falls short of justice for the victims, and that is not what victims of this state deserve."

The rulings come as states are increasingly turning to nitrogen gas in executions, despite concerns that have been raised about the method's potential flaws.

In 2024, Alabama carried out the first execution by nitrogen hypoxia in the United States. The inmate breathes in nitrogen through a mask, forcing loss of consciousness and then death from a lack of oxygen.

Alabama, like other states, had searched for alternative approaches after struggling to obtain the drugs needed for lethal injections. Several other states, including Louisiana, have approved the use of nitrogen gas. South Carolina legalized firing squads.

Witnesses to executions using the gas have said some of the men have convulsed and heaved for 10 minutes or more.

In her decision, Judge Marks noted that the case raised broader questions that the court — and indeed society — must wrestle with when it comes to capital punishment.

"The Constitution does not guarantee a painless death," she wrote. "And human life cannot be purposefully extinguished without some risk of pain. The Court, the condemned, and the State must all confront that sobering reality."

KAYLEE GREENLEE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Parents with children at public schools would be able to spend voucher money on tutoring, for example, provided by public schools.

Trump Vouchers May Benefit Public Schools

By DANA GOLDSTEIN

Private-school vouchers have usually been shunned by Democrats.

But as President Trump prepares to roll out his signature school-choice program, his administration is trying to reassure members of the opposition party that its effort breaks the mold.

Like other school voucher programs, the federal plan — the first of its kind — will provide taxpayer dollars for parents to spend on private-school tuition. But at a closed-door event at the Treasury Department this week, Kevin Salinger, a Trump administration official, told education advocates that the program will also benefit public schools and their students.

Public-school parents will be able to spend the funds on after-school tutoring or supplemental special-education services, for example. And public schools can provide some of those extras, though they may need to set up affiliated nonprofits or companies in order to accept the funds.

The Treasury Department event was described to The New York Times by several attendees, and The Times obtained a summary of Mr. Salinger's remarks.

Final regulations are expected in September.

The Trump program, known as the Education Freedom Tax Credit, was signed into law last year. It represents a new, potentially bipartisan framework for federal education policy, and has made for unusual allies, including some religious conservatives and prominent Democrats.

Governors have the choice of whether to opt their states into the program. So far, the only Democratic governors to sign on are Kathy Hochul of New York and Jared Polis of Colorado. But other Democrats who initially said they would opt out — including the governors of New Mexico, Oregon and Hawaii — have recently indicated that they are reconsidering.

"The tide is turning," said Jorge Elorza, chief executive of Democrats for Education Reform and a former mayor of Providence, R.I. He spoke at the Tuesday event alongside other centrist school-choice supporters.

Mr. Elorza has been lobbying Democratic state lawmakers to participate in the program despite its association with a president they revile, arguing that the money will allow Democrats to fund the after-school, enrichment and tutoring programs they have long supported.

Michael C. Bender and Sarah Mervosh contributed reporting.

KYLIE COOPER/REUTERS

Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, said schools need direct investment, not vouchers.

"If policymakers are making their decision strictly on the merits, they will see it's a no-brainer," he said.

The Treasury Department did not respond to requests for comment. An Education Department spokeswoman declined to comment.

The program does not reduce existing school funding. It is paid for through a federal tax credit. Beginning next year, individual taxpayers will be able to donate up to $1,700 annually to nonprofits that will bundle the money and redistribute it in the form of scholarships to pay for tuition, tutoring and other education expenses. The tax credit is unusually generous, allowing donors to reduce their tax bill by $1 for every $1 they donate.

About 90 percent of American families will be eligible to apply for the scholarships — all those earning up to 300 percent of their area's median income, which is over $300,000 in some parts of the country.

The program is not as large as its conservative supporters had initially hoped, and it could provide only limited support for home-schooling, another disappointment to many Republicans.

But it is structured to grow over time. It could eventually become one of the largest federal funding streams for K-12 education, totaling tens of billions of dollars annually, said Joshua Cowen, an education professor at Michigan State University and expert on private-school choice.

Dr. Cowen has long opposed state-level voucher programs because of their potential to reduce public-school budgets. But he argued it made sense for states to opt into the federal program, because public schools can actually increase their revenue by providing covered services like tutoring.

> A first-ever federal plan partly designed to lure Democrats.

"In what world would closing the door to new revenue make any sense?" he asked.

Dr. Cowen predicted that almost every governor would eventually choose to participate in the program.

Still, there remain fierce critics of the plan within the Democratic establishment.

Randi Weingarten, the influential president of the American Federation of Teachers union, said, "The use of public dollars for private voucher schemes remains anathema. While it's a good thing that the political backlash has resulted in some potential uses for public school parents, vouchers are never a substitute for direct, sustained investment in public education."

A group of state teachers' union leaders are preparing a national push to ask Democratic governors to reject the program.

And Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona, who is considered a potential Democratic presidential contender, has introduced a bill to repeal the plan. He has likened it to Arizona's state-level education savings accounts, which have disproportionately benefited wealthy families.

Arizona and most other Republican-leaning states already have sweeping private-school-choice programs that allow taxpayer dollars to fund private-school tuition and home-schooling materials. While earlier voucher programs were often reserved for low-income families, affluent parents now have access to the funds in many states, often using the money to subsidize tuition bills they previously paid out of pocket.

Democrats, teachers' unions and some parents' groups have argued for decades that directing tax dollars toward private schools leeches students and funding from public education, weakens accountability for academic outcomes and further segregates schools by class, race and religion.

Even many rural conservatives long opposed vouchers, since there are often few private schools in their counties, and public school districts are major employers and centers of community life.

But the politics of the issue have shifted significantly since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Public schools in some Democratic-leaning states were closed for more than a year, and students returned to school struggling academically and socially, with parents seeking out new forms of support.

In response, some Democrats have urged governors to opt into the Trump program, including Arne Duncan, who served as education secretary under President Barack Obama.

Support has increased among rural Republicans, as well. The rise of virtual home-schooling and microschools — tiny, often unregulated private schools run out of homes, churches and store fronts — convinced more rural policymakers to see vouchers as a viable choice for their constituents.

Florida Chooses President Over Right-Wing Protests

By STEPHANIE SAUL and ALAN BLINDER

The University of Florida's board on Wednesday unanimously backed Stuart R. Bell to become the school's next president, inching toward the end of a tumultuous two-year period that began with the abrupt resignation of Ben Sasse, the former Nebraska senator.

The state university system's board must still approve Dr. Bell's selection. The step is often a formality, but it thwarted a candidate for the job last year.

Dr. Bell previously served for a decade as the president of the University of Alabama, where he was recognized for expanding enrollment and elevating the university's status as a research institution, and for his involvement in Southeastern Conference athletics.

Addressing the board, Dr. Bell pledged to elevate the university to the top three of the U.S. News & World Report rankings, embracing a longtime goal of the board's president, Mori Hosseini.

"Your vision is my vision," he told the board. "Our North Star is to be the best public university in the United States." The school currently ranks seventh among public universities.

By picking Dr. Bell, Florida indicated a desire to return to a leader with a traditional academic background. Before his long tenure as Alabama's president, he had served as the dean of engineering at the University of Kansas and as provost at Louisiana State University, as well as a professor at Alabama.

The national rankings had driven a wedge between the board and Dr. Sasse, who had questioned their importance.

Dr. Sasse, a Republican who took over at Florida after spending eight years in the Senate, lacked the typical credentials of a major university president. After he resigned, Florida tried to appoint Santa Ono, the former University of Michigan president. The state board blocked the choice after Dr. Ono faced criticism from conservatives who attacked his former support for diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and what they saw as leniency toward pro-Palestinian protesters.

Last month, the University of Florida, which is in Gainesville, announced that Dr. Bell was the new sole finalist.

But he also immediately came under fire from conservatives in Florida and nationally who said that Dr. Bell, like Dr. Ono, had embraced D.E.I. by far too much. Separately, Senator Rick Scott, a Republican, attacked the search process for lacking transparency. Board members said they had followed a state law shielding presidential searches from public view.

Dr. Bell's nomination will now move to the board that upended Dr. Ono's plan, though Dr. Bell can point to the endorsement of Gov. Ron DeSantis, who has enormous sway over the board.

"Dr. Bell did much to elevate the University of Alabama when he was the president in Tuscaloosa and I have no doubt that he will help UF reach new heights during his tenure in Gainesville," the governor wrote on social media.

Still, Dr. Bell's appointment came as something of a surprise to many in Florida, who had assumed that Donald W. Landry, the interim president and former chairman of medicine at Columbia University, would be named to the role permanently.

Dr. Landry's contract includes a requirement that the university pay him severance of $2 million if he is not selected to the job as permanent president.

Judith Wilde, a research professor at George Mason University who studies university presidential pay, said last year that the provision was highly unusual. Mr. Scott, a former Florida governor, called the clause "crazy" in a letter last month to Ray Rodrigues, chancellor of the state university system.

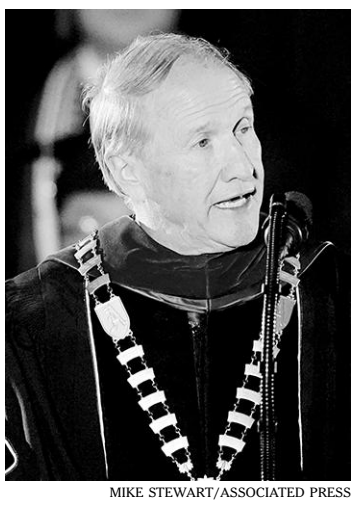
At Alabama, Dr. Bell, 69, openly embraced D.E.I. plans and ambitions. They included a committee he formed in 2019 to "support ongoing coordination and expansion of efforts" related to D.E.I., as the university put it at the time.

The next year, after the murder of George Floyd, Dr. Bell wrote that the university "must be a beacon of hope, equality and inclusivity."

But in 2024, citing a need for the university "to ensure compliance" with state law, Dr. Bell announced that Alabama would shut down its D.E.I. division. It was replaced with a division of opportunities, connections and success.

Addressing the issue on Wednesday, Dr. Bell pledged: "I am not coming to Florida to bring D.E.I. or 'woke' back," he said.

Alabama also became closely tied to Donald J. Trump during Dr. Bell's tenure. Mr. Trump appeared at football games and spoke at a commencement event in 2025, ending the university's long hiatus from hosting outside speakers for graduation festivities. In that speech, Mr. Trump described Dr. Bell as "highly respected."



MIKE STEWART/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stuart R. Bell, who served for a decade as the president of the University of Alabama, has won the endorsement of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

Dr. Bell's tenure in Tuscaloosa also included a run of debates over free speech and student behavior. In 2018, he pointedly distanced himself and the university from plans for an event with an avowed white nationalist. The event never happened after Alabama withdrew recognition for the group, Students for America First, that had planned it.

Dr. Bell, a Texas native who obtained three degrees from Texas A&M University, came to Alabama as enrollment was on the rise, but he continued that trend. During his first semester, in fall 2015, Alabama had about 37,000 students. A decade later, just after Dr. Bell stepped down, the university reported having more than 42,000 students.

Dr. Bell also spent time as the president of the executive committee of the SEC, the powerful college athletic league. At Alabama, Dr. Bell's tenure was notable for three national championships in football and the transformation of the Crimson Tide into a men's basketball force.

That should come as good news for fans of the Florida Gators, whose football program has struggled in recent years.

JOSÉ A. ALVARADO JR. FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

SHURAN HUANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

VINCENT ALBAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

New York streets and bars buzzed on Wednesday as the Knicks, led by OG Anunoby (8), seized a 3-1 lead in the finals.

Knicks Snap to Life, and a City Doesn't Sleep

From Page A1

And he defended President Trump, who had sat in the owner's suite two nights earlier and was intensely booed when he appeared on the video screen.

But in that same interview, Mr. Dolan promised victory in Game 4 against the San Antonio Spurs, and in the finals.

When the Spurs jumped out to what seemed like an insurmountable lead, Mr. Dolan's guarantee looked like a grave miscalculation.

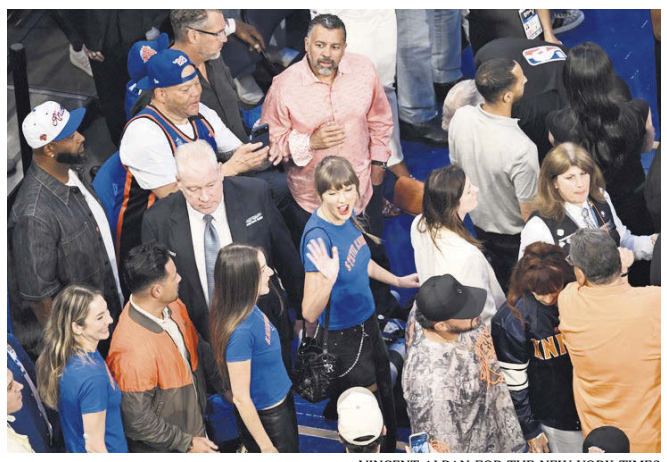
The Spurs couldn't miss. The Knicks couldn't stop them. Neither a video appearance from Ms. Swift, wearing a T-shirt that read "Stevie Knicks," nor a halftime performance from the Wu-Tang Clan seemed to brighten the crowd's mood.

Victor Wembanyama, the Spurs' bohemian 7-foot-4 star who has drawn adulation for his love of books and drawing in Gramercy Park during his stay in New York, is now a villain in the eyes of Knicks fans. They despise his tendencies to draw fouls and what they see as unsportsmanlike conduct.

He was at the center of attention early on Wednesday. The Garden crowd serenaded him with profane chants. A rare cheer came when a Knicks player, Mitchell Robinson, elbowed Mr. Wembanyama in the neck, and a replay was shown on the video board.

But in the second half, fans roared with each moment that looked even remotely optimistic. Outside the arena, police wearing riot gear clashed with some New Yorkers who showed up to a party that didn't technically exist.

VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



VINCENT ALBAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Iman Shumpert, a former Knick, and Taylor Swift reveled at Madison Square Garden.

"The vibe is just hard to describe," Mike Brown, the Knicks' coach, said after the game. "The energy in the crowd had a lot to do with our comeback."

The madness crested in the final seconds as the Knicks tried to erase a one-point deficit. After what appeared to be the team's final shot attempt bounced off the rim, Knicks forward OG Anunoby soared to tip it into the basket.

The Spurs' final attempt failed. Outside the arena, a city jumped for joy.

Along Avenue A in the East Village, traffic was partially stopped near East 13th Street as revelers chanted "Knicks in five!" and "Go New York, Go New York, Go!," the Knicks' anthem. Passing garbage trucks and buses blared their horns, cheered on by hundreds of rapturous fans.

"As someone who's not from New York, this is insane," Cara O'Donnell, a 24-year-old from Dublin, said. She photographed a throng of fans at an intersection near the Garden with an old-school film camera. Some people climbed a truck in celebration.

Next to the Union Street subway stop in Park Slope, Brooklyn, people who had gathered outside Antojitos Dominican restaurant craned their necks to watch the bar's TV from the sidewalk as the Knicks gained on the Spurs in the game's last minutes.

When the final buzzer sounded, the explosion of energy from the crowd could be heard underground in the station. "Just like that!" a man cheered.

The watch parties drew tens of thousands of fans, and most carried on without incident. Yet some of the celebrations grew dangerously unruly. Video on Thursday morning circulated of Knick fans who had gathered outside the Spurs' hotel, booing and screaming at the players as they exited the team bus. An object is thrown from the crowd and can be seen hitting Mr. Wembanyama.

The Police Department announced on Thursday morning that revelers had thrown glass bottles, gotten into fights, climbed scaffolding and buildings, and tried to flip over a taxi. By the end of the night, 15 people had been arrested and 41 people were given criminal court summons.

But the prevailing sentiment of the night was joy.

The Journey song "Don't Stop Believin'" blared in the arena minutes after the final horn. A security guard directed fans toward the stairwell with a simple, confident farewell.

"Good night. See you at the parade."

Reporting was contributed by Kaja Andric, Tania Ganguli, Andrew Keh, Jesse McKinley, Wesley Parnell and Bayliss Wagner.

Mamdani Finds a Foil Familiar to New Yorkers: Dolan

By DANA RUBINSTEIN

For James Dolan, the famously irascible owner of the New York Knicks, his sudden feud with Mayor Zohran Mamdani came as little surprise to longtime Madison Square Garden Kremlinologists.

But its 0-to-60 escalation in bitterness — with Mr. Dolan describing Mr. Mamdani and his police commissioner, Jessica S. Tisch, as fake Knicks fans and hopelessly inexperienced city managers — struck some observers as self-defeating, especially with his team on the cusp of its first N.B.A. title in more than 50 years.

Mr. Dolan's animus seems to stem from the city's decision to maintain a strict security zone surrounding the Garden, at a time when jubilant Knicks fans want to celebrate their team, unfettered.

Hours before Game 4 on Wednesday night, Mr. Dolan went on WFAN, a sports radio station, ostensibly to warn ticket holders to arrive early because the Police Department was implementing a security perimeter around the Garden, much as Ms. Tisch had foreshadowed during a news conference on Monday.

But Mr. Dolan also used the opportunity to to declare war on the mayor and Ms. Tisch.

Jonah E. Bromwich contributed reporting.

Over a 29-minute radio interview, Mr. Dolan described the two city officials as callow incompetents who have no faith in their underlings' ability to police the city, and have no true interest in the Knicks or in the New Yorkers eager to celebrate them.

"They have never managed anything like this before, and it's like peanut butter and jelly sandwiches coming out the sides," Mr. Dolan said.

If the moment was remarkable for its public disdain, it was also par for the course for Mr. Dolan. He has long nurtured his own unpopularity by, among other things, creating a facial recognition dragnet at his entertainment properties; picking feuds with Charles Oakley, the popular former Knicks player, as well as a mother accompanying her daughter's Girl Scout troop to the "Christmas Spectacular"; and even hiring a private eye to tail a state official investigating whether the company had broken state beverage laws.

Mr. Dolan "seems hell bent on making sure the city has rancid vibes for the finals run," Mr. Mamdani's spokesman, Joe Calvello, said Wednesday on social media

Mr. Dolan began his fusillade of attacks on the mayor and Ms. Tisch Tuesday night with a news release calling them "New York City's biggest party poopers" for implementing a "frozen zone" around the Garden for Game 4, just like the Police Department had for Monday's game, which both the mayor and the president attended.

That release was followed by another on Wednesday, arguing that there was no need for a "police state" and criticizing the 1,000-person limitation for a ticketed watch party outside the Garden. (The Garden's permit application for the Wednesday watch party, which was acquired by The New York Times, shows that a Garden employee sought a permit for between 500 and 999 attendees.)

Mayor Zohran Mamdani

That release was followed by another that declared that the team was canceling the watch party because it was too small.

A spokeswoman for the Garden referred all questions to the N.B.A., which declined to comment.

A police spokeswoman said the behavior of some Knicks fans during Wednesday night's game — including jumping on top of moving vehicles, throwing things at police officers, lighting fireworks in the middle of crowds and trying to turn over a taxi — proved the need for such strict security.

"Once again, there were large crowds of people who engaged in incredibly reckless and dangerous behavior last night both during and after the game," according to a police statement. "This demonstrates exactly why the N.Y.P.D. has increased our presence in and around Madison Square Garden."

The public spat between Mr. Dolan and Mr. Mamdani suggests Mr. Mamdani may have a harder time gaining access to the relatively low-cost house seats the Garden granted him and his colleagues for Monday's game.

Theoretically, it could also complicate Mr. Dolan's efforts to renew his operating permit with the city, which will come due in a few years, and his inevitable negotiations with the city surrounding the future of Penn Station.

Mr. Dolan "can't help himself," said Bill Cunningham, the former communications director for Michael R. Bloomberg, who also battled Mr. Dolan when he was mayor.

"He's on the verge of being a hero in the city and he picks a fight with the mayor," Mr. Cunningham said. "On the other hand, he's not wrong. There's no reason for them to have the same security zone for last night's game for what they had when the president was there."

Two City Council Members Question School Contracts

By MATTHEW HAAG

Two high-ranking members of the New York City Council are demanding greater oversight of contracts in the city's school system, expressing concern about an investigation into the chancellor over his involvement in a $180,000 no-bid deal for foreign language teachers.

The comments followed testimony on Wednesday at a City Hall hearing by Sean Kreyling, the chief executive of Language Learning Network, the company that provided the instructors. He portrayed the chancellor, Kamar Samuels, as a key player in brokering the contract during his previous job running schools on the West Side of Manhattan.

Mr. Kreyling said that Mr. Samuels signed the deal in 2023 and knew about a billing structure intended to bypass the Department of Education's stiff procural rules. Mr. Kreyling called the case a "significant financial malfeasance."

The testimony by Mr. Kreyling was hastily arranged by Council members on Tuesday night after publication of an article by The New York Times about the investigation. The hearing ratcheted up the pressure on Mr. Samuels just months after Mayor Zohran Mamdani appointed him chancellor. Mr. Samuels, who leads the largest school system in the United States, has acknowledged a "lapse in procedure," adding that his actions were "not for personal gain or to benefit anyone other than our schoolchildren."

Eric Dinowitz, the chair of the Council's Committee on Education, called the testimony "deeply troubling" and said it stressed the need for tighter contract review at the City Department of Education, particularly for no-bid contracts.

He said that he was concerned about the proliferation of deals under $25,000, which receive the least oversight within the department. The deal with Language Learning Network was structured so that payments would be kept under $25,000 and distributed to two companies tied to it.

"Now, we have more reporting that people in the D.O.E. allegedly engaged in conduct that speaks to the need for the oversight," Mr. Dinowitz said. "I'm not interested in talking about one individual. That's not what this is about. This is about a system that has flaws."

In the city's vast school system budgeted over $40 billion, principals and superintendents have some autonomy to hire providers on their own. Mr. Dinowitz said that the smaller contracts from schools across the city add up to $386 million.

"In the aggregate, it is a serious amount of money," he said.

Julie Menin, the Council speaker, said that she had "great concern" about contracts at the Education Department, which total more than $12 billion annually.

For nearly two months, Ms. Menin had been seeking detailed information about hundreds of contracts at the Education Department, including no-bid deals, according to a letter sent this month to Mr. Samuels and obtained by The Times.

The Education Department did not provide all of the information by her deadline this month, and she told Mr. Samuels this week that the response had been inadequate. The department provided no copies of contracts.

"This is an alarming lack of transparency," Ms. Menin wrote to Mr. Samuels.

The Office of the Special Commissioner of Investigation, an independent watchdog that examines misconduct at the Education Department, recently opened an investigation into Mr. Samuels over the contract.

While superintendent of the West Side, Mr. Samuels signed the $180,000 contract for foreign language instructors before the 2023-24 school year. The contract was renewed the next year and signed by his deputy superintendent, Mariela Graham.

The Special Commissioner of Investigation received a whistleblower complaint last year that one of the instructors provided by Language Learning Network had been barred from working in city schools. That teacher had been investigated in 2014 over allegations that he had made inappropriate comments toward students and touched a student's stomach. (Mr. Kreyling said he unaware of the allegations and fired the teacher.)

The complaint led to an investigation of Ms. Graham and the contract renewal, which had divided the payments into smaller amounts. Investigators found that Ms. Graham had arranged the payment plan, "exhibited astoundingly poor judgment" and recommended termination.

Ms. Graham has not responded to messages for comment. At Wednesday's hearing, Phil Wong, a council member, said the Education Department had promoted Ms. Graham to a senior role.

The Special Commissioner of Investigation did not investigateMr. Samuels as part of the earlier investigation, but said this week that the new inquiry was a result of "new allegations." Mr. Mamdani said that he took the investigation seriously but that he still had confidence in the chancellor's leadership.

Mayor Urged to Pause A.I. In New York City's Schools

By MATTHEW HAAG

A majority of New York City Council members have urged the mayor and the schools chancellor to pause the use of artificial intelligence in the city's schools, saying that the technology poses a "risk to student learning and mental health."

The request was conveyed in a letter on Tuesday that was signed by 29 of the city's 51 council members, who said that they had a range of concerns with A.I. in the classroom, including the technology's effect on students' cognitive development, critical thinking and privacy. The council members joined a growing roster of parents across the city who have spoken out against the technology as well as screens in the classroom, with some demanding a moratorium on A.I. in schools.

"We urge you to hold off and pause the use of A.I. in our schools except for education on the multiple risks in employing the technology until rigorous guardrails can be developed with public and expert input, to prevent serious damage to N.Y.C. children and their future," the council members wrote.

The letter adds to the pressure that Mayor Zohran Mamdani has faced in recent weeks to rein in the technology in public schools. Mr. Mamdani has repeatedly sidestepped questions about his opinion on an A.I. pause. But he has said that he understands parents' concerns about technology and suggested he supports reducing screen time at school.

School districts across the United States have deployed A.I. chatbots and software for teaching and learning, and some have gone further, creating A.I.-themed schools. The New York City school system, led by Kamar Samuels, the chancellor, has moved relatively slower, even temporarily blocking access to ChatGPT after it was first released, and has yet to fully embrace the technology like some of its peers.

But the use of A.I. applications by teachers and students has expanded in New York schools, and officials at the city's Department of Education have been working on the system's first guide to how teachers can incorporate A.I. into their work and classrooms. The final version is expected to be published this summer.

The school system released a preliminary version of the guide in March. It explains when A.I. is prohibited, when it should be used with caution and when it could be a helpful tool. Teachers could use A.I. to create lesson plans, for instance, but not to grade homework.

More than 6,000 people submitted feedback about the guide to the Education Department, with many making comments critical of the technology. In New York City and beyond, the pushback to A.I. has grown in recent months, uniting parents across age groups and backgrounds.

The backlash contributed to the Education Department's decision in April to pause the creation of an A.I.-focused high school in Manhattan for next school year.

Parents have complained about the lack of insight into which A.I. applications are used at their children's schools and the data that they may collect. They also worry that the larger embrace of technology in the classroom, including watching YouTube videos during recess and playing video games to learn math, undermines restrictions on screen time at home.

"Chancellor Samuels has a chance right now to come out and have some really strong regulation on technology," said Kailee Graham, whose oldest daughter is in kindergarten in a Manhattan school. "We have lost control and need to bring books back."

When the Education Department released its preliminary guide, Mr. Samuels said that the department needed to move with a "certain level of urgency" because A.I. was already in schools. "The system needs guidance," he said. "The system needs significant safeguards so that families can feel comfortable."

But at an event two weeks ago, Mr. Samuels said that public opinion on A.I. had drastically changed since he became chancellor in January. He called it "the most invasive technology that we've seen," Chalkbeat reported, and acknowledged that parents were deeply skeptical of technology companies.

Judge Rejects Lawsuit Aiming to Stop Move of Homeless Intake Shelter

By ANDY NEWMAN

New York City has received the go-ahead from a judge to move its main intake shelter for homeless men 20 blocks south, to a building in the East Village of Manhattan, ending a lawsuit that had delayed the move for more than a month.

The judge, Sabrina B. Kraus of State Supreme Court, said on Wednesday that the city had "given a rational explanation" for the decision to move the intake shelter to the East Village building, which already housed a shelter.

She rejected arguments from the building's neighbors that turning it into an intake shelter was a change major enough to have been subject to several types of reviews of its effect on the neighborhood.

For several decades, the first stop for men entering the shelter system in New York City had been a hulking former psychiatric clinic near Bellevue Hospital on East 30th Street that had decayed badly in recent years.

In March, the city announced that the building was in such dangerously poor condition that it needed to close immediately and that the city would move the intake shelter to 8 East Third Street, a building on a narrow side road that had served as the intake center in the 1980s. The East Third Street building was most recently a shelter for homeless men with substance-abuse problems.

After neighbors of the Third Street building sued the city in April, Justice Kraus temporarily blocked the city from moving its intake operation there as she heard arguments from both sides.

The East Village neighbors said that the more transient nature of the intake shelter — people typically stay there for only a few days, while the men in the substance-abuse program regularly stay for months — would lead to disruption and chaos.

But on Wednesday, the judge wrote that while she understood the residents' "frustration with the lack of opportunity to be heard on an issue that may indeed change the character of their block and neighborhood," she could not substitute her judgment for the city's.

Randy Mastro, a lawyer for the residents who had sought to block the move, said that his clients were considering appealing the decision.

"These cases are always a challenge because the legal standards are so deferential to city government and its decision-making," Mr. Mastro said. "That's why we have to hold government officials accountable when they do things like this."

SARA HYLTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

New York City determined an East 30th Street building in Manhattan was too dilapidated to use as its intake center for men.

The battle over the intake shelter is one of a handful of ongoing challenges to the city's shelter plans.

Last week, a judge dealt the city a loss by temporarily blocking the opening of a 110-bed men's shelter at a Ramada hotel in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn while a lawsuit challenging that move proceeds.

At a community board meeting last month where the shelter was discussed, some residents said that the city did not give sufficient notice about the plan and that the neighborhood was already home to several social-services facilities.

The city said it had moved to open the shelter in Crown Heights because the closing of the Bellevue intake shelter left the neighborhood short hundreds of necessary beds.

A spokesman for the City Department of Social Services, Nicholas Jacobelli, said in a statement that "we continue to evaluate and optimize existing capacity across the system so we can continue to identify suitable placements for all single adult men in need of shelter."

Another shelter that the city plans to open in Brooklyn because of the Bellevue closing, a 130-bed men's shelter in a former Red Roof Inn on Flatbush Avenue, also faces opposition from neighborhood residents and businesspeople. The building is across the street from Kings Theater, a historic landmark in the Flatbush neighborhood, and near several luxury apartment buildings.

The city's shelter system, consisting of hundreds of buildings run by dozens of nonprofit contractors, is constantly in flux as the homeless population grows, shrinks and changes. At any given time, the city is in the process of opening, closing or repurposing many shelters.

People who live near shelters often say that the spaces bring crime, open drug use and street harassment to the neighborhood, and try to block the city from opening them.

Some residents argue that the shelters are not fairly distributed across the city. A 2023 study by the city comptroller's office found that the density of shelters varies widely by community-board district. Some districts have none, while some have as many as 90 shelter beds per 1,000 neighborhood residents.

In that analysis, Crown Heights and the East Village ranked in the middle of the pack for number of shelters, and Flatbush ranked in the lower third.

In the financial district of Manhattan, residents are trying to close a "safe-haven" shelter — a type with fewer rules and restrictions — that opened a few steps from an elementary school.

In September, a judge blocked the city from opening the shelter, at 320 Pearl Street, ruling that the city had done an inadequate job evaluating the shelter's effect on the neighborhood and ordering a new impact study. The city finished the new study in January and opened the shelter several days later, during a deadly spell of cold and snow when the city was desperate to find places to move people indoors.

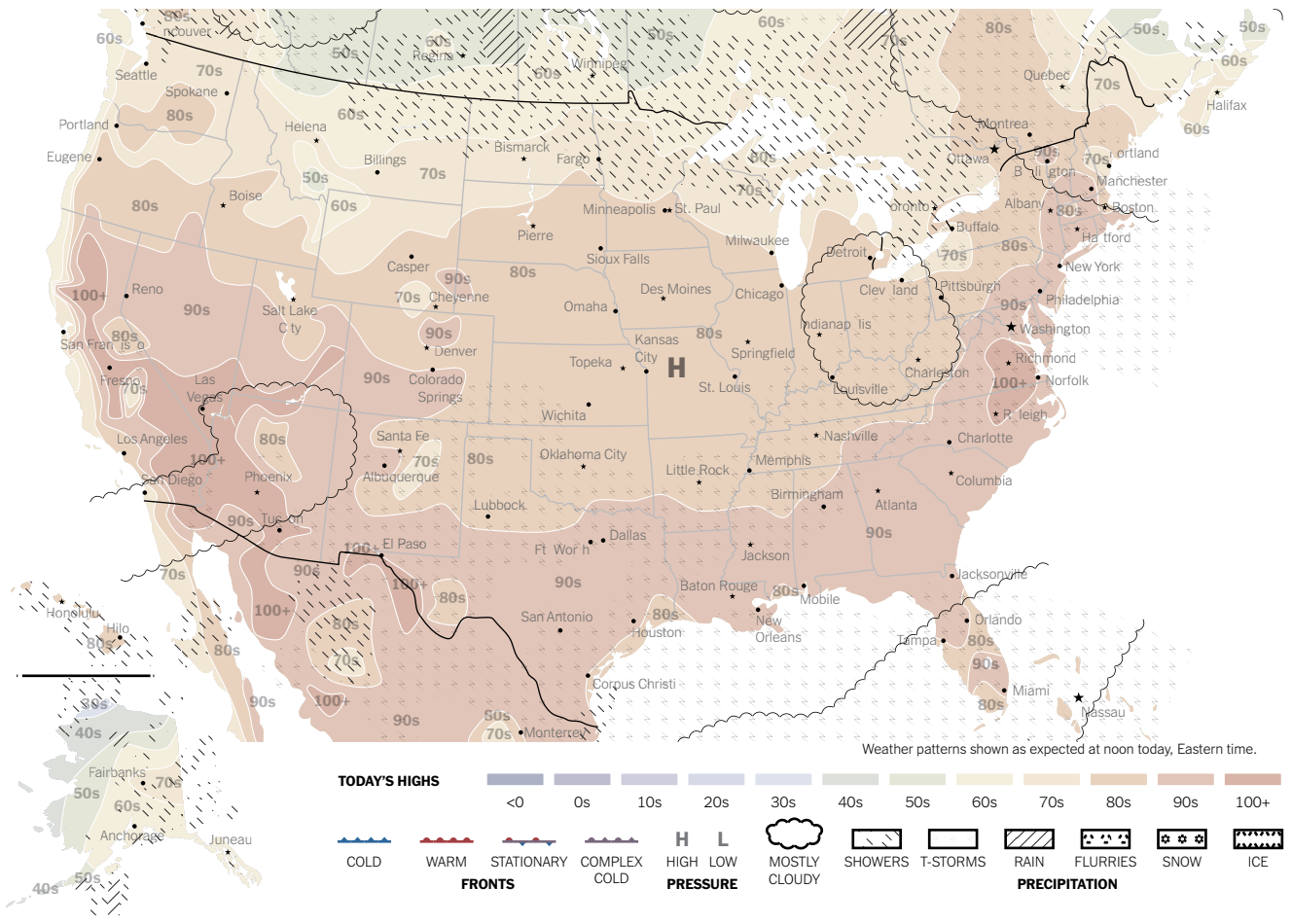
Late last month, the neighborhood opponents of the shelter filed a lawsuit challenging the study.

Anthony Duke Hannigan said he recently moved out of the area because he did not want to send his children to the school next to the shelter.

"We're not saying 'not in our backyard,'" he said in an interview last week. "We're simply saying 'not next to our school.'"

Weather Report

Meteorology by **AccuWeather**



Metropolitan Forecast

TODAY .....Heavy thunderstorms

High 93. Hot and humid conditions will continue with a mixture of clouds and sunshine. Temperatures will be around 15 degrees above average. Strong thunderstorms will occur late in the afternoon.

TONIGHT .....Heavy thunderstorms

Low 71. Strong thunderstorms in the evening will bring the risk of damaging winds, flooding downpours and hail. Temperatures will remain nearly 10 degrees above normal. The sky will be mostly cloudy.

TOMORROW .....Mostly sunny and warm

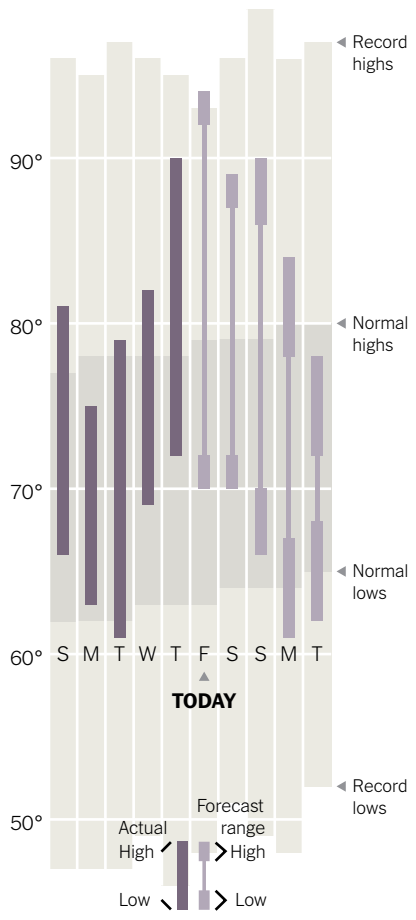
High 88. It will be less humid but still very warm, with temperatures staying around 10 degrees above average. Winds will be out of the northwest at 7 to 14 miles per hour with a mostly clear sky.

SUNDAY .....Sunny intervals

High 88. It will remain very warm with periodic sun and clouds, with winds out of the south at 6 to 12 m.p.h. Afternoon thunderstorms cannot be ruled out.

MONDAY
TUESDAY .....Turning cooler

Temperatures will return to near normal on Monday. High 81. Sunshine may dim from a few high clouds. Tuesday will be cool with plenty of sunshine. High 75.



Highlight: Downpours in the South and East

A front stretching from New England to the Gulf Coast States on Sunday will produce gusty thunderstorms and downpours across the region. Some of the storms will produce wind gusts up to 70 miles per hour and flash flooding.

National Forecast

Much of the Mid-Atlantic and the Northeast will remain hot and humid before rounds of severe thunderstorms in the afternoon along a cold front. Some of the storms will produce flooding downpours, damaging wind gusts and hail. The storms will break across northern portions of the Plains and much of the Midwest, with mostly dry and seasonable conditions.

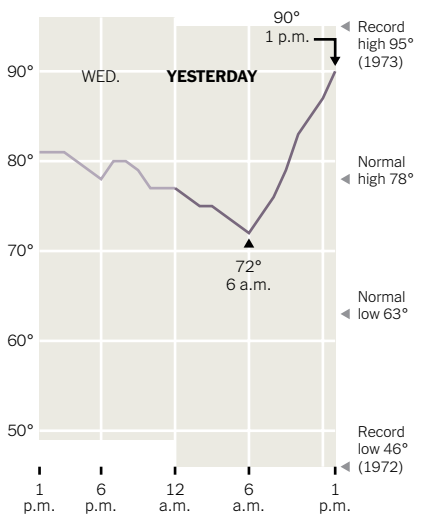
Showers and thunderstorms will cover much of the Tennessee Valley and the Southeast, where it will remain humid. The heat will continue for most areas of the Southwest, with some afternoon thunderstorms across eastern New Mexico and West Texas that may bring flooding downpours.

It will stay dry with temperatures near the 30-year average across most of the Intermountain West and the Northwest.

Metropolitan Almanac

In Central Park, for the 13 hours ended at 1 p.m. yesterday.

Temperature



Avg. daily departure from normal this month ..... +3.2°

Avg. daily departure from normal this year..... -0.1°

Reservoir levels (New York City water supply)

Yesterday 95%
Est. normal 98%

Precipitation (in inches)

Yesterday 0.00
Record 1.14

For the last 30 days
Actual 2.59
Normal 4.28

For the last 365 days
Actual 34.61
Normal 49.52

LAST 30 DAYS

Air pressure

High ..... 29.81 8 a.m.
Low ..... 29.78 4 a.m.

Humidity

High ..... 93% 6 a.m.
Low ..... 60% noon

Cooling Degree Days

An index of fuel consumption that tracks how far the day's mean temperature rose above 65

Yesterday..... 16
So far this month..... 86
So far this season (since January 1) 224
Normal to date for the season 138

Trends

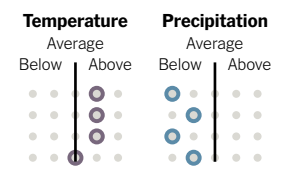


Chart shows how recent temperature and precipitation trends compare with those of the last 30 years.

Cities

High/low temperatures for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday, Eastern time, and precipitation (in inches) for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday. Expected conditions for today and tomorrow.

C ..... Clouds
F ..... Fog
H ..... Haze
I ..... Ice
PC ..... Partly cloudy
R ..... Rain
Sh ..... Showers
S ..... Sun
Sn ..... Snow
SS ..... Snow showers
T ..... Thunderstorms
Tr ..... Trace
W ..... Windy
– ..... Not available

N.Y.C. region	Yesterday		Today	Tomorrow
New York City	90/ 72	0	93/ 71 T	88/ 71 S
Bridgeport	84/ 68	Tr	90/ 68 T	89/ 64 S
Caldwell	91/ 71	0	95/ 68 T	89/ 63 S
Danbury	88/ 68	Tr	94/ 66 T	88/ 59 S
Islip	90/ 66	0	94/ 69 T	90/ 66 S
Newark	92/ 73	0	97/ 71 T	92/ 71 S
Trenton	90/ 70	0	93/ 67 T	87/ 61 S
White Plains	89/ 70	0	95/ 66 T	87/ 65 S

United States	Yesterday		Today	Tomorrow
Albany	87/ 69	0.04	92/ 62 T	85/ 62 S
Albuquerque	96/ 68	0	94/ 67 T	97/ 70 PC
Anchorage	61/ 47	0	64/ 51 PC	63/ 52 C
Atlanta	91/ 74	0	95/ 75 S	91/ 74 T
Atlantic City	90/ 74	0	89/ 71 T	87/ 67 S
Austin	92/ 77	Tr	91/ 74 T	91/ 74 T
Baltimore	97/ 73	0.15	99/ 68 T	89/ 66 S
Baton Rouge	93/ 75	0.04	92/ 76 PC	93/ 76 T
Birmingham	92/ 75	0	93/ 74 T	89/ 72 T
Boise	78/ 52	0	86/ 52 S	84/ 56 S
Boston	89/ 75	0.04	86/ 69 T	86/ 67 PC
Buffalo	83/ 70	0.05	78/ 62 T	78/ 66 S
Burlington	88/ 70	0.10	94/ 62 T	85/ 63 S
Casper	74/ 36	0	84/ 40 S	59/ 38 PC
Charlotte	92/ 73	0.04	98/ 74 PC	94/ 72 T
Chattanooga	91/ 71	Tr	92/ 73 T	93/ 72 T
Chicago	84/ 59	0.75	82/ 65 S	87/ 63 PC
Cincinnati	88/ 71	0.13	83/ 62 T	85/ 66 PC
Cleveland	85/ 73	0.08	80/ 62 T	85/ 69 PC
Colorado Springs	78/ 47	0	89/ 60 S	82/ 50 C
Columbus	86/ 73	0.10	85/ 62 T	85/ 67 S
Concord, N.H.	91/ 66	0.08	94/ 64 T	88/ 57 S
Dallas-Ft. Worth	95/ 78	Tr	91/ 78 T	94/ 78 PC
Denver	78/ 55	0	90/ 53 S	80/ 50 PC
Des Moines	73/ 57	0.14	84/ 64 S	76/ 55 T
Detroit	88/ 68	0.01	82/ 61 PC	87/ 66 S
El Paso	103/ 79	0	100/ 76 T	102/ 80 T
Fargo	72/ 53	0.13	78/ 52 Sh	66/ 49 W
Hartford	92/ 70	0.15	93/ 66 T	91/ 60 S
Honolulu	87/ 71	0.14	87/ 70 S	85/ 72 PC
Houston	92/ 77	0.04	91/ 77 T	92/ 78 T
Indianapolis	89/ 65	0.01	81/ 62 PC	85/ 66 S
Jackson	94/ 75	0	94/ 75 T	93/ 75 T
Jacksonville	92/ 73	0.06	93/ 75 C	96/ 75 T
Kansas City	88/ 58	0.11	84/ 67 S	80/ 58 T
Key West	89/ 82	0.06	90/ 81 T	88/ 80 PC
Las Vegas	104/ 82	0	109/ 85 S	109/ 84 S
Lexington	90/ 73	0	84/ 60 T	86/ 68 PC
Little Rock	93/ 75	0	83/ 73 T	90/ 74 T
Los Angeles	85/ 63	0	84/ 64 S	81/ 64 S
Louisville	92/ 74	0	87/ 66 T	88/ 71 C
Memphis	95/ 75	0	85/ 74 T	89/ 75 T
Miami	90/ 78	0	91/ 77 T	91/ 76 T
Milwaukee	78/ 57	1.03	80/ 64 S	83/ 57 T
Mpls.-St. Paul	70/ 57	0.24	83/ 62 S	73/ 53 PC
Nashville	95/ 75	0	87/ 69 T	91/ 74 PC
New Orleans	91/ 77	0.04	91/ 76 T	91/ 77 T
Norfolk	95/ 76	0	100/ 76 T	85/ 71 S
Oklahoma City	96/ 68	0.15	86/ 73 T	94/ 69 T
Omaha	78/ 58	0	86/ 65 S	76/ 56 T
Orlando	90/ 75	0.10	93/ 75 T	94/ 75 T
Philadelphia	95/ 76	0.15	96/ 71 T	90/ 70 S
Phoenix	109/ 84	0	109/ 87 PC	109/ 88 PC
Pittsburgh	86/ 72	Tr	83/ 61 T	83/ 63 S
Portland, Me.	78/ 62	0.26	75/ 59 T	82/ 58 PC
Portland, Ore.	78/ 51	0	80/ 55 S	94/ 60 S
Providence	93/ 70	0.15	89/ 69 T	90/ 64 S
Raleigh	99/ 72	0.06	103/ 75 T	96/ 74 PC
Reno	89/ 58	0	96/ 63 S	93/ 62 S
Richmond	97/ 74	0.04	101/ 72 T	92/ 68 S
Rochester	86/ 69	0.08	81/ 60 T	82/ 63 PC
Sacramento	102/ 63	0	102/ 59 S	97/ 57 S
Salt Lake City	75/ 54	0	87/ 61 S	89/ 63 S
San Antonio	92/ 78	Tr	90/ 76 T	91/ 77 T
San Diego	74/ 66	0	75/ 66 PC	76/ 66 PC
San Francisco	85/ 58	0	77/ 56 S	72/ 58 PC
San Jose	95/ 63	0	92/ 60 S	85/ 58 S
San Juan	89/ 78	0.08	90/ 78 C	90/ 78 W
Seattle	71/ 51	0	74/ 56 PC	81/ 60 S
Sioux Falls	72/ 55	0.17	85/ 60 PC	77/ 51 S
Spokane	73/ 48	0	75/ 53 PC	78/ 55 S
St. Louis	97/ 65	0.10	84/ 68 S	84/ 69 T
St. Thomas	88/ 80	0.03	87/ 80 T	89/ 79 S
Syracuse	85/ 70	0.08	84/ 59 T	82/ 64 S
Tampa	89/ 77	0.15	90/ 78 T	90/ 78 T
Toledo	87/ 67	0	82/ 61 PC	88/ 65 S
Tucson	103/ 77	0	104/ 79 PC	104/ 79 PC
Tulsa	93/ 68	0.24	87/ 75 C	91/ 68 T
Virginia Beach	88/ 75	0	96/ 75 T	83/ 71 PC
Washington	95/ 75	0.15	97/ 70 T	90/ 71 S
Wichita	90/ 62	0	87/ 71 C	96/ 62 T
Wilmington, Del.	94/ 72	0.15	95/ 68 T	90/ 66 S

Africa	Yesterday		Today	Tomorrow
Algiers	80/ 68	0	80/ 59 W	82/ 62 S
Cairo	96/ 73	0	94/ 73 PC	96/ 73 PC
Cape Town	61/ 48	0.04	64/ 46 Sh	63/ 43 PC
Dakar	82/ 75	0	83/ 75 S	84/ 75 S
Johannesburg	65/ 39	0	71/ 43 PC	73/ 42 PC
Nairobi	80/ 53	0	73/ 58 R	73/ 60 C
Tunis	88/ 70	0	86/ 66 S	85/ 65 S

Asia/Pacific	Yesterday		Today	Tomorrow
Baghdad	114/ 84	0	109/ 81 PC	106/ 81 S
Bangkok	93/ 75	0.31	91/ 79 R	95/ 80 R
Beijing	89/ 57	0	90/ 68 PC	79/ 63 T
Damascus	95/ 61	0	94/ 61 S	93/ 62 S
Hong Kong	85/ 78	0.14	85/ 81 R	89/ 80 R
Jakarta	90/ 75	0	92/ 77 PC	89/ 77 T
Jerusalem	81/ 63	0	83/ 62 S	82/ 63 S
Karachi	104/ 88	0	100/ 84 W	97/ 84 W
Manila	91/ 82	0.03	96/ 81 T	96/ 81 T
Mumbai	93/ 86	0.02	92/ 84 T	92/ 84 Sh
New Delhi	101/ 85	0.28	94/ 78 T	95/ 77 S
Riyadh	109/ 83	0	111/ 84 S	111/ 84 S
Seoul	79/ 57	0	81/ 59 S	87/ 66 PC
Shanghai	92/ 69	0	91/ 73 PC	78/ 69 R
Singapore	87/ 81	0.22	90/ 80 Sh	91/ 80 T
Sydney	68/ 60	0	68/ 54 PC	70/ 61 PC
Taipei City	79/ 71	0.11	78/ 74 R	84/ 76 R
Tehran	97/ 77	0	99/ 78 PC	98/ 75 PC
Tokyo	79/ 64	0	76/ 68 Sh	79/ 69 PC

Europe	Yesterday		Today	Tomorrow
Amsterdam	63/ 48	0.02	66/ 57 R	63/ 55 Sh
Athens	91/ 68	0	87/ 69 PC	80/ 62 Sh
Berlin	68/ 52	0.26	66/ 56 R	69/ 51 Sh
Brussels	63/ 48	0.07	68/ 57 Sh	68/ 52 PC
Budapest	73/ 57	0.04	75/ 54 S	77/ 58 PC
Copenhagen	63/ 50	0.01	62/ 52 R	62/ 51 R
Dublin	65/ 52	0.58	65/ 50 PC	66/ 47 PC
Edinburgh	61/ 45	0.09	63/ 51 Sh	61/ 46 Sh
Frankfurt	66/ 48	0.13	70/ 59 Sh	77/ 52 S
Geneva	68/ 48	0	78/ 52 S	84/ 54 PC
Helsinki	64/ 54	0.04	65/ 47 C	63/ 50 Sh
Istanbul	82/ 66	0	83/ 68 S	72/ 62 Sh
Kyiv	84/ 61	0	79/ 55 PC	70/ 55 PC
Lisbon	91/ 68	0	95/ 70 PC	90/ 64 PC
London	61/ 50	0.06	71/ 55 C	72/ 53 PC
Madrid	90/ 57	0	96/ 64 S	96/ 65 PC
Moscow	84/ 64	0	87/ 65 PC	82/ 62 Sh
Nice	76/ 66	0	79/ 67 S	79/ 66 S
Oslo	64/ 45	0.01	62/ 52 Sh	62/ 51 Sh
Paris	66/ 48	0	78/ 57 C	80/ 54 PC
Prague	60/ 50	0.17	62/ 55 Sh	72/ 49 Sh
Rome	77/ 68	0	87/ 61 PC	84/ 58 S
St. Petersburg	70/ 51	0	71/ 56 C	63/ 57 R
Stockholm	66/ 45	0	66/ 50 S	60/ 48 Sh
Vienna	68/ 52	0.14	68/ 58 PC	79/ 59 Sh
Warsaw	61/ 54	0.62	67/ 52 Sh	68/ 52 Sh

North America	Yesterday		Today	Tomorrow
Acapulco	85/ 76	0	90/ 76 S	89/ 75 S
Bermuda	77/ 68	0	79/ 72 PC	80/ 73 PC
Edmonton	57/ 48	0.01	59/ 40 Sh	68/ 43 PC
Guadalajara	78/ 64	0.03	84/ 64 T	79/ 64 T
Havana	86/ 72	0	85/ 71 R	89/ 71 R
Kingston	86/ 79	0	90/ 81 PC	89/ 81 W
Martinique	89/ 78	0.12	89/ 79 Sh	89/ 78 R
Mexico City	71/ 59	0	77/ 58 R	74/ 59 R
Monterrey	84/ 71	0	89/ 70 T	88/ 70 PC
Montreal	80/ 70	0.01	87/ 63 T	80/ 65 Sh
Nassau	85/ 77	0.01	88/ 77 T	87/ 76 S
Panama City	90/ 75	0	93/ 76 T	90/ 76 T
Quebec City	75/ 61	0.08	74/ 60 T	80/ 59 T
Santo Domingo	88/ 73	0.04	85/ 74 T	91/ 74 T
Toronto	88/ 70	0.01	80/ 62 C	82/ 68 Sh
Vancouver	62/ 48	0	69/ 54 PC	74/ 55 S
Winnipeg	63/ 57	0.04	63/ 47 Sh	57/ 45 Sh

South America	Yesterday		Today	Tomorrow
Buenos Aires	61/ 53	0	60/ 51 PC	59/ 40 Sh
Caracas	87/ 76	0.05	91/ 76 C	92/ 75 PC
Lima	74/ 69	0	76/ 68 C	76/ 68 C
Quito	73/ 46	0	68/ 44 R	67/ 50 R
Recife	84/ 79	0	84/ 77 Sh	85/ 78 PC
Rio de Janeiro	73/ 69	0.10	78/ 71 PC	78/ 67 PC
Santiago	59/ 30	0	63/ 46 C	63/ 41 C

Recreational Forecast

Sun, Moon and Planets

New	First Quarter	Full	Last Quarter
June 14 10:54 p.m.	June 21	June 29 7:56 p.m.	July 7

Sun	RISE	5:24 a.m.	**Moon**	R	2:51 a.m.
	SET	8:28 p.m.		S	6:01 p.m.
	NEXT R	5:24 a.m.		R	3:31 a.m.
Jupiter	R	8:03 a.m.	**Mars**	R	3:32 a.m.
	S	10:48 p.m.		S	5:40 p.m.
Saturn	R	2:11 a.m.	**Venus**	R	8:12 a.m.
	S	2:38 p.m.		S	11:05 p.m.

Boating

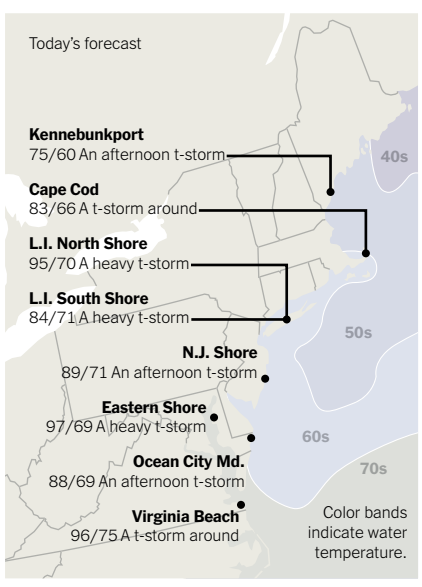
From Montauk Point to Sandy Hook, N.J., out to 20 nautical miles, including Long Island Sound and New York Harbor.

Winds will be from the west at 5-15 knots. Waves will be 1 foot or less on New York Harbor and Long Island Sound and around 3 feet on the ocean. Scattered late-day thundershowers will reduce visibility.

High Tides

Atlantic City	5:19 a.m.	5:48 p.m.
Barnegat Inlet	5:35 a.m.	6:03 p.m.
The Battery	6:06 a.m.	6:29 p.m.
Beach Haven	7:00 a.m.	7:27 p.m.
Bridgeport	9:17 a.m.	9:32 p.m.
City Island	9:14 a.m.	9:26 p.m.
Fire Island Lt.	6:28 a.m.	6:55 p.m.
Montauk Point	6:57 a.m.	7:19 p.m.
Northport	9:31 a.m.	9:47 p.m.
Port Washington	9:31 a.m.	9:43 p.m.
Sandy Hook	5:42 a.m.	6:09 p.m.
Shinnecock Inlet	5:30 a.m.	6:00 p.m.
Stamford	9:21 a.m.	9:39 p.m.
Tarrytown	7:55 a.m.	8:18 p.m.
Willets Point	9:17 a.m.	9:25 p.m.

Beach and Ocean Temperatures



The beaches of the Northeast will be hot and humid, with periodic sunshine and clouds. Late-afternoon thunderstorms could disrupt activities across the coast, particularly from southern Long Island to Virginia Beach, where they will bring the risk of damaging winds, flooding downpours and hail.

Man Who Murdered Minnesota Legislator and Husband Pleads Guilty

By MITCH SMITH

MINNEAPOLIS — A year ago this weekend, Minnesota awoke to a terrifying situation.

State Representative Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, had been fatally shot at their suburban Minneapolis home.

A few miles away, State Senator John A. Hoffman and his wife, Yvette, were found with gunshot wounds at their house.

And the gunman, who fired at police officers before disappearing into the night, was nowhere to be found. More than a day would pass, as residents hunkered down and officers fanned out for miles, before there was an arrest.

On Thursday, the gunman, Vance Boelter, pleaded guilty in federal court to murder and stalking in the attack, which the authorities have said was politically motivated. Prosecutors recommended that he be sentenced to life in prison, and they agreed not to seek the death penalty.

The attack on the legislators, both Democrats, raised fears about increasing political violence in the United States. And the violence shattered the culture that had long defined politics in Minnesota, where lawmakers listed their home addresses online and made it easy for residents to contact them.

In the year since, Minnesota has changed. Politicians have scrubbed personal information from their websites. Security checkpoints have been installed at the State Capitol.

The state reeled, too, in the months that followed. An August attack at a Catholic church and school in Minneapolis left two students dead and more than 20 people wounded. The deployment of thousands of immigration agents to Minnesota this winter led to three shootings, combustive protests and a collapse in state-federal relations.

Through it all, Minnesota officials often invoked the attacks on the Hortmans and Hoffmans as an example of all the trauma that they and their constituents had endured.

Last June, as the manhunt for Mr. Boelter was underway, law enforcement officials urgently contacted a long list of public figures, many of them Democratic politicians, whose names had been found inside a car that he abandoned at one of the shooting scenes. The state's leaders told people who had planned to attend "No Kings" protests that weekend to stay home after investigators found papers in the vehicle suggesting he might have been planning to attack demonstrators.

Prosecutors would later say that Mr. Boelter, who they said had disguised himself as a police officer and worn a mask, had gone near the homes of two additional Democratic legislators that night. At one house, they said, he went to the door but found that nobody was home. At another, they said, he left after a police officer noticed him and tried to talk to him.

Inside the federal courthouse in downtown Minneapolis on Thursday, Mr. Boelter described how the attacks played out as he responded to a series of questions from one of his lawyers.

Yes, he said, he had planned the attack for months.

Yes, he said, he had conducted research on Ms. Hortman and Mr. Hoffman.

Yes, he said, he wore a mask and disguised himself as a police officer.

Mr. Boelter, wearing an orange sweatshirt and pants with his legs shackled, spoke in even tones and answered extensive questions from Judge John R. Tunheim, who accepted the guilty pleas and the plea agreement. Mr. Boelter, who was led in and out of court by federal agents, interacted only with his lawyers and did not appear to look at the gallery, which was filled with journalists and people connected to the victims' families.

The two surviving shooting victims, John and Yvette Hoffman, were among those in the courtroom.

"There is no justice for Mark and Melissa Hortman, and there is not justice when our family and our state will never truly heal," the Hoffman family said in a statement after the hearing. "While the legal process may provide accountability, true healing requires something more from all of us."

Daniel N. Rosen, the top federal prosecutor in Minnesota, told a judge on Wednesday that his office had reached an agreement with Mr. Boelter and asked for a change of plea hearing, which was scheduled almost immediately.

TIM GRUBER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

State Representative Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, were shot dead in 2025.

After the hearing on Thursday, Mr. Rosen described political violence as "a scourge plaguing America" and said that he expected Mr. Boelter to spend the rest of his life in prison without parole.

"To all of those who would commit political violence: This Justice Department will seek and obtain the longest prison terms for your offense," Mr. Rosen said in a statement.

Earlier in the week, the Justice Department said it had decided not to seek the death penalty after determining that the underlying stalking charges against Mr. Boelter most likely did not make him eligible for capital punishment.

"Prosecutors worked hard on this case to make sure he was held accountable to the fullest extent possible," Emily Covington, a Justice Department spokeswoman, said in a statement earlier in the week.

Federal prosecutors can seek the death penalty when a violent crime leads to a murder involving a firearm. There is doubt about whether stalking qualifies as a violent crime under court precedent.

Mr. Rosen described the legal landscape in somewhat different terms on Thursday. He said he believed that Mr. Boelter would have been eligible for the death penalty if he were convicted at trial and that the case had been charged correctly. He added that "the only circumstance under which the death penalty was off the table" was if Mr. Boelter agreed to plead guilty.

Mr. Rosen declined to say whether his office had recommended seeking the death penalty to Justice Department officials in Washington, but he said there was "no daylight" on the matter between him and the attorney general.

Mr. Boelter was charged in connection with the shootings in both state and federal court. Minnesota has no death penalty for state crimes, but federal prosecutors initially left open the possibility that they might pursue capital punishment.

The Hennepin County attorney, Mary Moriarty, whose office is prosecuting the state charges against Mr. Boelter, said the plea agreement in federal court would not affect the state case. A state official who has previously provided statements on the behalf of the Hortmans' adult children said after the hearing that the family did not wish to comment.

Ms. Hortman, a former speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives, was a lawyer by training and a legislator for about 20 years. She played a major role in passing a wide array of bills during the 2023 session, when Democrats held a slim majority, including legislation that expanded abortion rights, legalized recreational marijuana and required employers to offer paid family and medical leave.

Mr. Hortman, who worked for an electrical manufacturing company, was recalled by friends as a supportive political spouse with a sense of humor and an interest in sports.

The killings, which took place on June 14, 2025, drew bipartisan condemnation. Mourners lined up around the block outside the State Capitol as the couple lay in state. Former President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and former Vice President Kamala Harris attended their funeral.

WILLIAM LIANG/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Safety concerns last month over a hazardous chemical tank in Garden Grove, Calif., led to the evacuation of 40,000 residents.

Agents Scour California Plant After It Nearly Exploded

By TIM ARANGO and LIVIA ALBECK-RIPKA

Federal agents on Wednesday were searching the premises of an aerospace company in Orange County, Calif., where last month tens of thousands of people fled their homes after officials said a chemical tank was at risk of exploding.

Agents from the F.B.I. and the E.P.A. were collecting evidence, including records that might show who was involved in the storage of the hazardous chemicals; samples of the substance within any "tank, tote, drum, vat, vessel or container"; records of equipment inspections; and digital devices, among many other items, according to a warrant the authorities obtained last week.

A spokesman for the U.S. attorney's office in Los Angeles confirmed that agents were searching the site on Wednesday morning.

The evidence was collected at an industrial site in Garden Grove, Calif., that belongs to GKN Aerospace, whose tank was the source of the near disaster. It contained 7,000 gallons of methyl methacrylate, which had become pressurized and was overheating as it released gas. The tank, officials had said, was at risk of exploding into a massive fireball.

As temperatures increased in the tank, officials became alarmed and issued evacuation orders for more than 40,000 residents on May 22, sending them into shelters for the Memorial Day weekend. Firefighters cooled the tank by spraying water at its exterior.

By the following Monday, officials said that the worst-case scenario had been averted because the tank had cracked, alleviating the pressure. Evacuation orders were rescinded for more than half of the residents who had to flee, although some who lived near the site had to wait longer to return home.

Both Gov. Gavin Newsom of California and the White House had issued emergency declarations as the crisis unfolded.

On Wednesday, television stations were showing helicopter footage of agents on the premises.

GKN Aerospace issued a statement saying, "we are cooperating with authorities at our Garden Grove facility and will continue to do so."

The company, based in Birmingham, England, builds parts for jet engines and landing gear for military and civilian aircraft.

The news of the search by federal agents came as anger toward the company continues to swell within the community.

At a City Council meeting in Garden Grove on Tuesday night, dozens of residents expressed rage and dismay at what they described as a lack of accountability by GKN Aerospace, which had agreed for the first time to meet face-to-face with city officials.

Some residents at the meeting held signs that read "GKN OUT," "MAKE GKN PAY," and "U.S. WAR MANUFACTURERS OUT OF OUR COMMUNITY."

The company has pledged $3 million to assist residents of Garden Grove, a working-class city of about 170,000 people, but many have scoffed at the figure and demanded full compensation for the hardship of having to evacuate for several days with little warning. Some described leaving medications, documents and valuables behind; others said they had slept beneath thin blankets or in cars; losing work and sleep. Some older residents had been unable to evacuate, community members said.

"GKN, you scared us — you put our elderly, our children, our pets, our homes, our jobs — all of it — in danger," Jeana Wardlow, a longtime employee of the Garden Grove Unified School District, said at Tuesday's meeting, where hundreds of community members packed a meeting chamber and two overflow rooms.

Steve Carlin, the senior vice president of GKN Aerospace, apologized.

"I'm sorry for this event, for this incident, that occurred," he said.

He noted the plant's long history in the city, and said it employed about 500 people, most of whom live in Garden Grove and nearby.

"We are very much aware that we have broken the trust in the last couple of weeks, and we have a long way to go to earn back that trust," Mr. Carlin said.

City officials pressed Mr. Carlin on the company's plans to prevent future disasters, asking whether it would remove hazardous chemicals altogether. They also asked if the company would pledge additional funds to fully compensate residents. Mr. Carlin said GKN Aerospace was still investigating the episode and evaluating how to move forward.

He agreed to hold a town hall at which community members could ask questions directly of the company.

Texas Welcomed Data Centers. Now Governor Asks for Limits.

By LAUREN MCGAUGHY

AUSTIN, Texas — Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas has proposed new regulations for the state's booming data center industry, including repealing some tax incentives and requiring water-efficient technologies, as Republican leaders try to balance economic growth and local opposition.

Mr. Abbott, a Republican seeking a fourth term, sent the recommendations to state regulators and directed them to take immediate steps to ensure certain costs linked to data centers were not passed on to local consumers. He pledged to work with state lawmakers to roll back sales tax exemptions and other costly incentives for data center developers.

Data center companies, particularly those supporting the artificial intelligence industry, have flocked to Texas, lured in part by the state's promise of minimal regulation. With hundreds operational and more on the way, Texas is poised to become the country's leading data center market within three years, according to a recent report from Bloom Energy.

But local communities targeted by these developers, many in rural and largely Republican areas, have pushed back because of concerns about water use, noise pollution and utility costs.

In an announcement on Wednesday, Mr. Abbott appeared eager to act on those concerns from potential Republican voters in an election year, while putting off many of the final decisions. The full extent of any new regulations won't be clear until the State Legislature meets next year.

Mr. Abbott is taking action now, he said in a letter to regulators, as the industry's expansion requires enormous infrastructure and resource investments.

Data centers could use up to 9 percent of the state's water by 2040, according to a recent study by the University of Texas at Austin. The state has also received requests for new data centers that far outstrip the current supply of electricity.

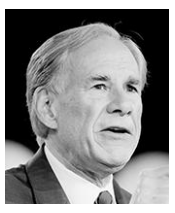
"The rapid scale of data center development requires oversight to ensure everyday Texans are not burdened with the costs of infrastructure driven by data center expansion," Mr. Abbott wrote in the letter, to the state's Public Utility Commission and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, the state's grid operator.

He directed them to "prevent data centers from shifting development risks and costs onto Texans."

While Mr. Abbott has encouraged companies to invest in the state, calling Texas the "epicenter of A.I. development," he has also warned that the industry's expansion has to be controlled. He recently signed into law new transparency requirements for companies using A.I. He has also banned certain A.I. technologies on state devices that he said could be exploited by "hostile foreign actors."

Some local leaders have said they lack the power to block data center construction or expansion. The state A.I. law pre-empts A.I. regulations at the local level.

The governor's proposals do not suggest giving local communities more authority over data centers or A.I. technologies. Instead, he said, state lawmakers must pass laws requiring companies "to reduce impacts" on their neighbors through noise-reduction technology and other means.



Gov. Greg Abbott's proposals include repealing some tax incentives for data centers.

State Representative Gina Hinojosa, the Democrat challenging Mr. Abbott for governor, accused him of "backtracking" from an anti-regulation stance now that incentives for data centers have become unpopular.

"Greg Abbott has zero credibility here," she said in a statement. "No one believes that the arsonist is going to put out the fire."

Dan Diorio, the vice president of state policy for the Data Center Coalition, said the national industry group would work collaboratively with the state but warned against cookie cutter regulations.

In a statement, he said many data center developers have already done much of what Mr. Abbott wants, including shouldering the full cost of the infrastructure, like transformers and breakers, to support their energy needs.

"There is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to facility design, cooling technology or regulation," Mr. Diorio said.

Some environmentalists in Texas embraced Mr. Abbott's proposals. Luke Metzger, with Environment Texas, a group that has sought data center regulations, applauded the recommendations and said in a statement that lawmakers should also regulate air pollution from these centers and "encourage cleaner alternatives."

Former Officer Pleads Guilty to Sending Inappropriate Texts to Crime Victims

By HURUBIE MEKO

A former officer with the New York Police Department has pleaded guilty in Manhattan to sending sexual and inappropriate messages to women who were victims of a crime and for having sex with another woman shortly after he arrested her.

The former officer, Matthew Lambert, pleaded guilty on Wednesday to three counts of official misconduct and to one count of receiving unlawful gratuities, both misdemeanors. He was sentenced to two years' probation, 100 hours of community service and counseling.

Mr. Lambert, 33, joined the Police Department in 2014 and resigned in December. As part of his guilty plea, he agreed to not seek a police officer job in New York State. Mr. Lambert's lawyer did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In a statement, Alvin L. Bragg, the Manhattan district attorney, said Mr. Lambert's actions were "not how anyone should be treated — whether a victim, witness, or person accused of a crime."

Mr. Lambert's actions spanned several months in 2024, according to prosecutors. At the time, he was assigned to the 13th Precinct's detective squad, which investigates crimes in a southern portion of Midtown Manhattan.

In March that year, Mr. Lambert was assigned to investigate a missing package, according to a plea agreement, and over the course of several months he sent inappropriate text messages from his department-issued phone to the woman who reported the theft.

In one message, Mr. Lambert wrote: "Celebration drinks when this is over?" and "If you say no, I'm still gonna work hard on your case. I promise." In another, he told the woman that he was "just nervous to ask you out because of the circumstances lol," adding "like me being in charge of your case."

At other points, Mr. Lambert texted the woman that he was also taken, that he would "always keep it professional," and "you don't owe me anything at all."

Also in March 2024, Mr. Lambert was assigned to investigate an assault. He began texting the assault victim messages, telling her she was "beautiful" and "I was shocked when I met you."

In May 2024, while processing a woman he arrested for petty larceny, Mr. Lambert told her that he could probably get her a desk appearance ticket or released from custody to avoid being held in central booking until she was arraigned. He also showed the woman a photograph of his naked and erect penis, prosecutors said.

About two hours later, Mr. Lambert issued the woman a desk appearance ticket, which ordered her to return to court at a later date. As he walked her out of the precinct, prosecutors said Mr. Lambert told her: "I told you I was going to get you out."

Within minutes, Mr. Lambert began texting her, asking if he should "come say hello."

That same night, Mr. Lambert saved explicit pictures of the woman on his work phone and texted her: "I'm surprised you sent me all that."

Shortly after midnight, Mr. Lambert arrived at the woman's residence in Manhattan, and they had sex in his car, according to court documents.

"You're so cool," he later texted the woman. "Thanks for hanging out."

Corrections

BUSINESS

An article on Wednesday about the H-2A visa program mischaracterized the nature of the authorization granted to guest workers by the Labor Department. The department certifies applications for jobs from employers; it does not issue visas. The error was repeated in a chart.

Errors are corrected during the press run whenever possible, so some errors noted here may not have appeared in all editions.

Contact the Newsroom
To contact the newsroom regarding correction requests, please email corrections@nytimes.com.

Speight Jenkins, 89, Adventurous Director Of Seattle Opera, Dies

By TIM PAGE

Speight Jenkins, an opera journalist, critic and commentator who had never produced a performance of any kind when, in 1983, he was hired as the general director of Seattle Opera, which he turned into one of the most adventurous and respected companies in the United States during a 31-year tenure, died on May 30 in Seattle. He was 89.

Seattle Opera confirmed the death, at a hospice facility, but did not provide a cause.

A journalist and critic who fell in love with opera when he was 6.

Passionate about opera from an early age and sought after as a speaker, with his infectious wit and thick Southern drawl, Mr. Jenkins, a native Texan, came to Seattle in 1982 to lecture about Wagner, a specialty of the company's and his.

The board, which was looking for a new director, asked him for advice about the search, was impressed by his knowledge and ideas, and ended up offering him the job.

"Even all the critics said: 'What does he know? He's only a critic,'" Mr. Jenkins told The New York Times in 2001. "But I knew that I knew opera, I knew singers."

The company's ticket sales were struggling, and balancing the budget had become an overriding focus.

"I'm all for being financially responsible," he said a few years later, "but you can carry anything too far. In this case, quality had begun to suffer, particularly the look of the productions."

Swiftly doubling the budget, which caused some early deficits, Mr. Jenkins began to emphasize edgier repertory and directing styles.

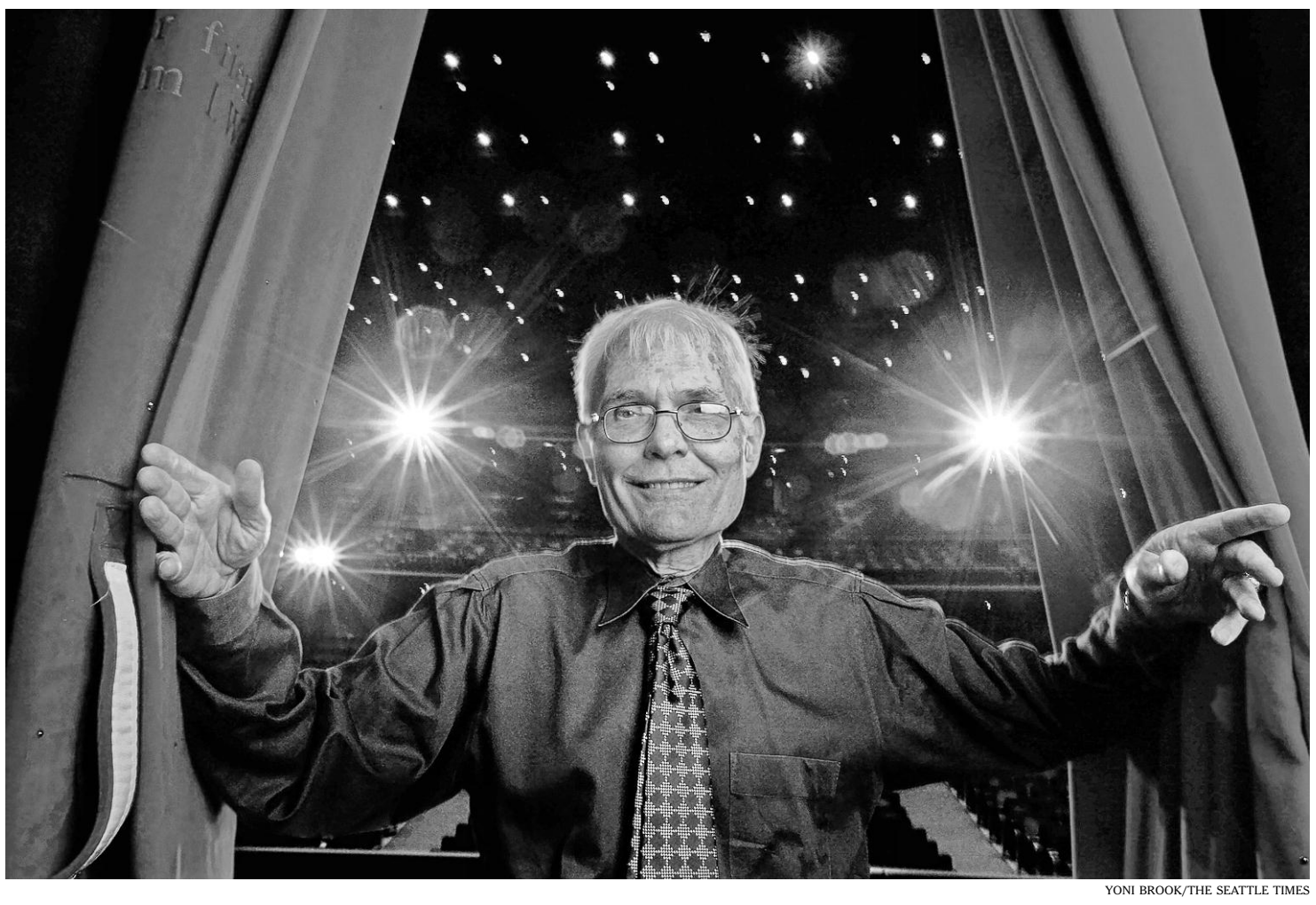
Seattle had, before his time, become known for its performances of Wagner's four-opera "Ring." But soon after Mr. Jenkins's appointment, he replaced a traditional staging of the cycle with an avant-garde one that polarized audiences — in a good way. He eagerly embraced the new technology of above-the-stage supertitle translations, which made opera far more accessible. (Imagine watching a Bergman film without subtitles.)

"With Wagner, it made all the difference in the world," Mr. Jenkins said of the titles, adding: "Everybody thought that Wotan's monologue" — a 20-minute sequence in "Die Walküre" — "was boring. Now nobody does."

Under his leadership, the company offered early opportunities to singers like Renée Fleming, Ben Heppner and Jane Eaglen, and presented productions like the director Christopher Alden's modern vision of "Don Giovanni," Francesca Zambello's ambitious (and expensive) staging of Prokofiev's epic "War and Peace" and a 1993 "Pelléas et Mélisande" designed by the glass artist Dale Chihuly.

In 2001, the company's third "Ring" production, directed by Stephen Wadsworth, evoked the wilds of the Pacific Northwest; by then, Seattle's Wagner offerings were drawing visitors from around the country and the world. Two years later, its opera house reopened after a renovation that cost $127 million (roughly $230 million today).

And while new works were never the company's priority, Mr. Jenkins did participate in commissioning operas by composers like Daron Hagen, Jake Heggie and Daniel Catán, and was beloved for leading what the company said were nearly 1,000 post-performance talkbacks.



YONI BROOK/THE SEATTLE TIMES

Speight Jenkins in 2003 at McCaw Hall, Seattle Opera's home theater. In 1983, he was a surprise choice to lead the company.

"I love to work with Speight," David Gockley, then the general director of Houston Grand Opera, said in 1995, "because of that dogged enthusiasm he has for everything, that wide-eyed excitement."

Speight Jenkins Jr. was born on Jan. 31, 1937, in Dallas, to Speight Jenkins Sr. and Sara Baird Jenkins, wealthy, culturally active philanthropists.

He fell in love with opera when he was 6 and heard a Metropolitan Opera radio broadcast of "Die Walküre." "I have no idea why Wagner hit me at that age," he later told The Dallas Morning News, "but it connected to me instantly."

He saw his first operas, "Aida" and "Faust," a year later. A touring Met performance of "Rigoletto" starring Jan Peerce and Leonard Warren affected him enough that he later recalled thinking, "This is what I'm going to do with my life."

"I studied a little piano and clarinet," he told The Times in 2001, "but I really had no desire to perform, conduct or direct. So my parents would say, 'What do you want to do, sit in an opera house all your life, listening?' Well, exactly!"

Mr. Jenkins graduated from the University of Texas and, after a stint at Cornell's medical school in New York, earned his law degree from Columbia.

He was drafted and served as an Army lawyer in Iran (where he hosted a classical music radio show) and, later, at Fort Hood in Texas. When he was around 30, he mulled returning to school to study music history, but decided to follow his father's suggestion that he try out criticism.

Moving to New York, he became an editor at Opera News in 1967 and also began reviewing performances. Among them was the 1971 Met debut of the conductor James Levine, who, Mr. Jenkins wrote, "brought to 'Tosca' a dramatic tautness frequently missing in the Met's pit."

Mr. Levine, he added, "should have a great career ahead of him."

In 1973, he became a critic for The New York Post, and from 1981 to 1983 was a host of "Live From the Met" on PBS.

By then, Mr. Levine had become the Met's music director and a friend, and was one of the people Mr. Jenkins consulted when Seattle Opera's board asked if he would be interested in replacing Glynn Ross, who had been the company's director from its start in the early 1960s.

"You were always designed to do this," Mr. Jenkins recalled Mr. Levine telling him. "You were never designed to be a critic. You must do it."

By the time he retired, three decades later, the company was weathering the same financial pressures as other nonprofit performing arts organizations, and had cut back its annual schedule to four productions from five. (The coming 2026-27 season in Seattle includes just three staged operas.)

Mr. Jenkins married Linda Sands in 1966. She survives him, along with their son, Speight III; their daughter, Linle Jenkins Froeb; and three grandchildren.

Mr. Jenkins said his management style was built on two pillars: close involvement with every detail of every production and supportive treatment of visiting artists. He liked to quote the great soprano Birgit Nilsson: "Songbirds sing when they're happy."

"If a singer is unpleasant to the wig people or the makeup people while they're here," Mr. Jenkins said, "I may not bring them back. But while they're here, we're going to make them happy."

Souleymane Diallo, 80, Journalist Who Skewered Guinea's Autocrats

By ADAM NOSSITER

Souleymane Diallo, an independent newspaper publisher in the West African nation of Guinea who suffered harassment, official probation and even imprisonment for his irreverent take on the rule of his country's oppressive leaders, died on June 1 in Montreal. He was 80.

His death, at a hospital, was confirmed by Mamadou Diawo Barry, the director of Le Lynx, the satirical weekly newspaper that Mr. Diallo helped found in 1992. Mr. Barry said that Mr. Diallo had suffered from heart problems. Mr. Diallo lived in Conakry, Guinea's seaside capital, and had traveled to Canada, where his daughter Idiatou Diallo lives, for medical treatment.

Le Lynx stands out in a West African press landscape in which subservience is the norm. Year after year, as Mr. Diallo's impoverished coastal nation reeled under a succession of power-hungry, trigger-happy military men and politicians who promised change, Le Lynx — named after an animal with a penetrating gaze — mocked, investigated, caricatured and chided.

From dingy offices in downtown Conakry, where the decrepit printing presses matched the peeling walls, Mr. Diallo was the ringmaster, inciting his young reporters and cartoonists to question and provoke whoever was in power. His own weekly columns — with recent headlines like "Silence, We're Censuring!" and "Silence, We're Lying!" and "Silence, We're Messing Up!" — were equally provocative, skewering the powerful with lapidary precision.

In February 2024, he wrote that Gen. Mamady Doumbouya, who seized control of Guinea in a 2021 coup, "thinks we've actually mistaken the path, and the era: The internet is not a right, and social media, radio and other means of communication should only channel praise-singers following orders."

El Tigre Konaté condamne l'acte de Toumba dans les casernes
c'est une honte pour l'armée !»
JUSTICE
DIPLOMAGIE
STOP!
LA RACAILLE EST TERMINÉE !
DANS LES RANGS VITE !

LA KAMBOU/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

A 2009 copy of Souleymane Diallo's satirical newspaper Le Lynx, named for an animal with a penetrating stare.

He added, "So we Guineans should therefore be thankful for this return to the Middle Ages."

Before Le Lynx came on the scene, Guinea had a largely controlled press that printed government propaganda. Much changed thanks to the work of Mr. Diallo.

For his efforts, he was arrested and briefly jailed twice, in 1995 and 1996, during the dictatorship of Gen. Lansana Conté, who was in power from 1984 to 2008, for offending the chief of state, defamation and falsifying documents. He was placed on probation under President Alpha Condé, in power from 2010 to 2021. Last October, the offices of Le Lynx were burglarized and the printing presses damaged.

Mr. Diallo never stopped. He continued writing his column even while he was in jail, and he never ceased decrying what he regarded as the theft of Guinea's early promise.

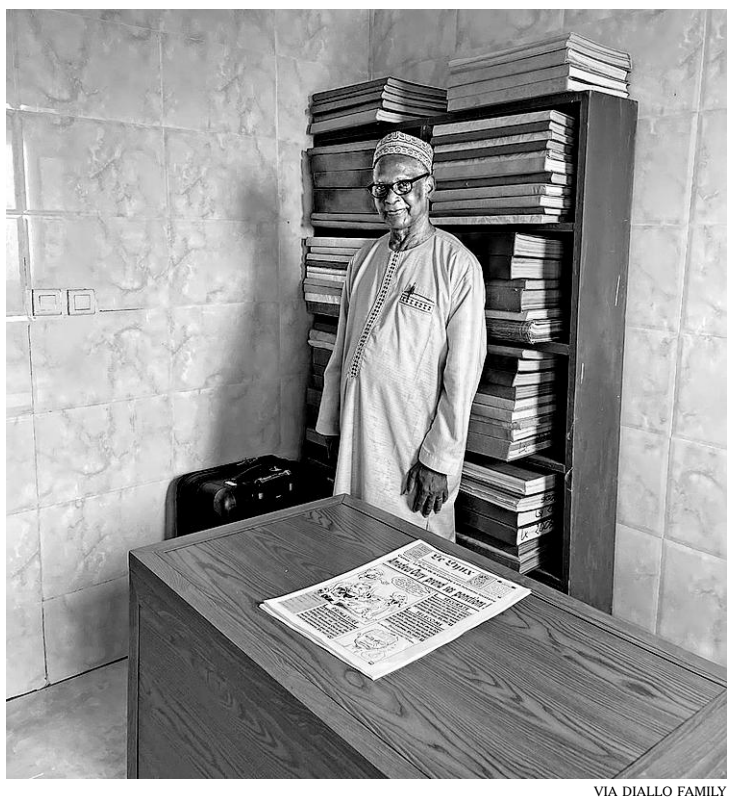
Ahmed Sékou Touré, the first leader of an independent Guinea, boldly broke from France in 1958 but quickly became a paranoid tyrant, forcing up to a third of his compatriots (including Mr. Diallo) into exile and torturing hundreds of others at a prison camp in the middle of Conakry.

Mr. Touré remained in power until his death in 1984. Recalling his famous declaration to the French leader Charles de Gaulle that Guineans "prefer to be free and poor rather than rich and enslaved," Mr. Diallo wrote in 2010,

A publisher who was harassed and jailed but was never cowed.

not long after the country had weathered yet another coup, "Ever since then, we've never ceased trooping to the polls for results that are always known in advance."

He wrote those words on the eve of the country's first-ever free election. "A week before the vote," Mr. Diallo added, mockingly, "and we still don't know the winner: a real sacrilege, given our historic past."



VIA DIALLO FAMILY

Mr. Condé, who won that election, would go on to illegally claim a third term, bloodily repress demonstrations and jail opponents. Mr. Diallo earned the president's ire by publishing the exorbitant cost of his travel abroad, and Mr. Condé was regularly depicted in caricatures in Le Lynx as grasping, sweaty and sinister — "the climber," in the newspaper's description.

In December, General Doumbouya won over 86 percent of the vote in the election after barring his main challengers from taking part in the race. Just before the vote was held, Mr. Diallo printed a cartoon that left little to the imagination, depicting nine polling booths, but only one drawing voters. As a voter approaches, sweating in fear, General Doumbouya is shown napping inside, his legs crossed, a Kalashnikov rifle in front of him.

Le Lynx is protected, at least in part, by the limitations on its power in a country in which fewer than half of all adults are literate. Yet this "strange newspaper that refuses to give up," as the French paper Libération called it last year, remains something of a miracle amid a series of dictatorships.

"Le Lynx opened up a new era," Mr. Diallo wrote in 2001. "People bought newspapers. They informed themselves. We printed caricatures of the leader. We published uncomfortable ideas.

"Bring me the damn newspaper!" he added, mouthing the voice of his readers. "I want to see what those bums have written!"

Souleymane Diallo was born on Nov. 17, 1945, in Labé, the capital of the mountainous Fouta Djallon region in Guinea's north. He was one of about 10 children of Thierno Amadou Diallo, a local village chief, and Mominatou Diallo, one of his father's four wives.

According to Mr. Barry, his colleague, Souleymane Diallo was from an aristocratic lineage and was a descendant of Karamoko Alfa, a warrior imam who helped found Labé in the 18th century.

After his parents died when he was 5, he was raised largely by his uncles, his daughter Idiatou said in an interview.

Mr. Diallo graduated from the Lycée de Labé in 1961, attended Guinea's National Languages Institute in Conakry in 1962 and received a diploma from the Federal Advanced Teachers' Training College in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1966. He received a Ph.D. in Anglophone studies from the University of Nice, in France, in 1985.

In 1970, Mr. Diallo went to work as a reporter for Mr. Touré's party newspaper Horoya, but soon felt stifled at having to recycle propaganda for a repressive government. He went into exile in Ivory Coast in 1973, working for the Ivorian newspaper Fraternité Matin, and did not return to Guinea until 1990.

In February 1992, he started Le Lynx with a group of friends. The only printer in Conakry, scared of losing government business, refused to have anything to do with the upstart publication, and Mr. Diallo had to fly a computer disk with the paper's contents to Abidjan, in Ivory Coast.

Vendors attempting to sell the first issue were harassed. But soon after the second issue appeared, "all of Conakry rushed to get it," Mr. Diallo recalled. "By 4 o'clock in the afternoon, there wasn't a single copy left."

In addition to his daughter, Mr. Diallo is survived by his wife, Fatoumata, and two other daughters, Mariam and Kadiatou. His son, Mohamed, died in 2021.

Mr. Diallo never stopped hoping or despairing. "Most of our neighbors have known civil war," he wrote in 2024, "but they've succeeded in turning the page, out of patriotism, to look in the same direction, to the future of their country."

He added bitterly: "As for us, we burst with impatience every evening to also all look in the same direction, toward the television set, to see if we've benefited from a new government decree."

The New York Times

Following the facts, wherever they lead.

We interrogate the world with curiousity rather than certainty, remaining skeptical, humble and searching as we explore every story, no matter how well we think we know a topic.

Duane Michals, Photographer With Quirky Stories to Tell, Dies at 94

By RICHARD B. WOODWARD

Duane Michals, an impish, provocative artist who used his camera to tell stories with quirky, cosmic, enigmatic or autobiographical themes, helping introduce narrative to modern photography, died on Tuesday in Manhattan. He was 94.

His death, at a hospital, was confirmed by Bridget Moore of DC Moore Gallery, which represented him.

A self-taught photographer and proud misfit, Mr. Michals neither belonged to a particular school of art nor founded one. His influence derived chiefly from proving that someone could succeed without conforming to genre or technical norms.

He published more than 25 books; exhibited regularly at galleries starting in the late 1960s and continuing into his 90s; and had retrospectives at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh in 2014-15 and the Morgan Library and Museum in Manhattan in 2019.

While other photographers of his era found material in the chaos of street life or the majesty of nature, he took inspiration for his pictorial storytelling from the images and writings of William Blake, Lewis Carroll, Joseph Cornell and René Magritte.

A typical Michals work might be structured like a comic strip, with multiple panels of black-and-white photographs accompanied by handwritten titles or captions, or both.

The prints were usually small and not individually consequential. He might need as few as four or as many as 30 to complete a piece. His works could depict a metaphysical reckoning between strangers ("Chance Meeting," 1970); a ribald sex comedy ("Take One and See Mt. Fujiyama," 1975); a cryptic parable with biblical overtones ("The Return of the Prodigal Son," 1982); a children's fable with a moral ("Grandmother and Odette Visit the Park," 1992); or a reminiscence of growing up ("The House I Once Called Home," 2003).

Sometimes he would write beneath each photograph in a sequence; other times he relied on the title alone to do the explanatory lifting.

"Death Comes to the Old Lady" (1969) consists of five panels without text. In the first, a seated woman stares at the camera. In the next two panels, a man in a dark suit appears by her side. He is first seen as a blur and then dissolves into a black shadow except for his hand, placed on her shoulder. In the last photo, she rises and dissolves into blurry shadow herself. (To play the Old Lady, Mr. Michals enlisted his grandmother; he chose his father to be Death.)

"When I write, it's to talk about what you cannot see in the photograph," he said in a 2019 interview. "It's to augment the photograph, to give voice to the silence of it."

These literary accompaniments were often wry or lyrical. "My Father Could Walk in the Sky" (1989), a double exposure of a naked man seen from below against a dark, starry sky, was accompanied by rhyming couplets: "My father could walk in the sky / He promised to teach me how / But he left without saying goodbye / I don't cry, I'm a grownup now."

Despite early recognition for Mr. Michals's photographs — they were included in the landmark "Contemporary Photographers: Towards a Social Landscape" exhibit at the George Eastman House (now Museum) in Rochester, N.Y., in 1966, and he had a solo show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1970 — they never commanded particularly high prices.

That rankled him as he aged — he had a curmudgeonly side — and he openly satirized younger artists like Cindy Sherman and Andreas Gursky, who were able to make a living by selling prints to collectors. Mr. Michals supported himself from the 1970s to the '90s with corporate commissions and by doing celebrity portraits for Newsweek, Fortune and other magazines.

Duane Stephen Michals was born on Feb. 18, 1932, in McKeesport, Pa., a suburb of Pittsburgh. His father, John, was a steelworker; his mother, Margaret (Matik) Michals, was a live-in domestic who saw her son and his brother, Timothy, only on weekends.

As a boy, Duane had an interest in drawing that was nurtured by classes at the Carnegie Museum, and in 1949 he earned a scholarship to study graphic design at the University of Denver. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1953, he enlisted in the R.O.T.C., serving two years in Germany before moving to New York City in 1955 to work in publishing.

He discovered photography by chance in 1958, after borrowing a camera from a friend to take on a trip to the Soviet Union. His first efforts were documentary in nature. They found their fullest expression in "Empty New York" (1964-65), a series that portrayed Manhattan's deserted streets, subway cars, lunch counters and shop fronts in the detached style of Eugène Atget's photographs of Paris at the turn of the 20th century. (Mr. Michals's documentary images were largely unknown as a series until 2018, when he published them as a book.)

Atget's work led him toward the surrealism of Magritte, Cornell and Giorgio de Chirico. Eventually Mr. Michals renounced documentary photography as insufficient for his artistic ambitions. "To photograph reality," he once said, "is to photograph nothing."

He considered himself lucky that he didn't have to "unlearn" what was taught in art school. "I didn't know that you weren't supposed to write on a photograph," he said.

Although his sequenced photographs were staged, the theatrical constructions were seldom costly or elaborate. The sets were spare; the props, often little more than a chair, a bed and a potted plant. In "The Spirit Leaves the Body" (1968), the first of seven panels shows a naked man lying on a covered table. Double exposures of his body then depict a shadowy figure sitting up, standing and walking toward the camera until the figure fills the frame.

Short and slight, and bald by the time he was in his 30s, Mr. Michals was openly gay well before it was widely accepted. For more than 50 years, he shared an apartment in Manhattan with Frederick Gorree, an architect. They were married from 2011 until Mr. Gorree's death in 2017. Mr. Michals has no immediate survivors.

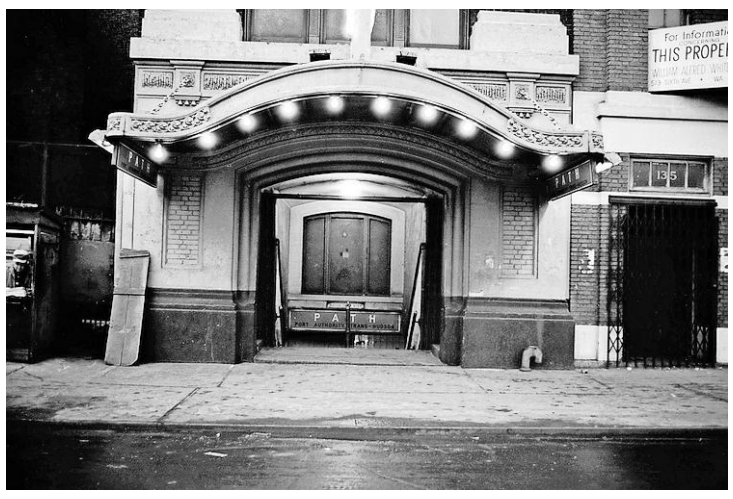
Mr. Michals ignored trends in political or conceptual art. His art often empathized with the anxieties of the very young ("The Bogeyman," 1973) or the old ("Grandpa Goes to Heaven," 1989). In recent years, he collaborated with Josiah Cuneo, a director, to make short films on comical or fantastical themes that were recognizably akin to his photographic sequences.

Seeking to bridge the chasm between the phenomenal and spiritual worlds, his work often illustrated his frustrations as well as his questions. As an artist, Mr. Michals devoted himself singlemindedly, but seldom without humor, to what could — and couldn't — be said in words or shown in a photograph.

"I believe the only true knowledge is through experience," he said. "You read a love story, and then you fall in love — then you realize the difference. I want to know what something feels like, not what it looks like."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DUANE MICHALS, VIA DC MOORE GALLERY, NEW YORK

A typical Duane Michals work might be structured like a comic strip, with multiple panels of black-and-white photographs accompanied by handwritten titles or captions, or both. He might need as few as four or as many as 30 to complete a piece. "Chance Meeting" (1970) depicted a metaphysical reckoning between strangers.



Mr. Michals's "Empty New York" (1964-65) portrayed Manhattan's deserted streets, subway cars, lunch counters and shop fronts.

Mr. Michals, right in a self-portrait in 2025, long supported himself with corporate commissions and celebrity portraits. Above, "Mr. Backwards Forwards" (2016), the actress Tilda Swinton.

A proud misfit who neither belonged to a particular school of art nor founded one.

Richard B. Woodward, a journalist and critic who wrote widely about the arts, died in 2023.

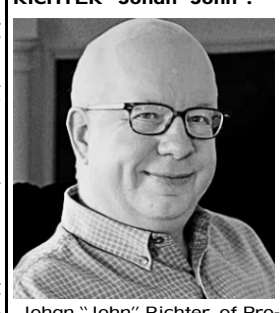
Ash Wu contributed reporting.

Deaths

Rendon, Diane
Richter, Johan
Rosenthal, Janice
Shapiro, Adam
Tisch, Wilma

RENDON—Diane C.
Diane C. Rendon, 80, passed away on April 26, 2026, at Danbury Hospital. Born on January 16, 1946, in Queens, New York, Diane was a loving wife, mother, and friend, and accomplished nurse educator, and advocate. She lived in New York City for most of her life. After graduating from St. Helena's High School in the Bronx, Diane entered the Bellevue School of Nursing, where she discovered a lifelong passion for health care and education. Over the next seventeen years, while working professionally and raising a family, she earned a B S. in Nursing and an M.S. in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing from Hunter-Bellevue, and an Ed.D. in Nursing Education from Columbia University Teachers College. Diane began her career at Bellevue Hospital, whose renowned psychiatric services shaped much of her professional life. There she met the love of her life and husband of 57 years, Dr. Mario I. Rendon, a Colombian psychiatrist. Together they built a life centered on family, intellectual curiosity, and care for others.Over the course of her career, Diane worked as a nurse, instructor, lecturer, researcher, administrator, and advocate for the nursing profession. She published on geriatrics and Alzheimer's disease and went on to become Director of the Hunter- Bellevue School of Nursing, her alma mater and one of the country's leading nursing schools. In recognition of her contributions, Diane was inducted into the Hunter College Hall of Fame in 2002 and the Teachers College Columbia University Nursing Hall of Fame in 2008. A passionate advocate for nursing, she challenged misconceptions about the profession and worked tirelessly to advance nursing education and recognition. It is estimated that she educated more than 2,000 nurses during her career, many of whom went on to serve communities across New York City and beyond. Upon her retirement, colleagues described her as "an extraordinary woman and nurse" whose teaching skills were unmatched and whose contributions significantly advanced the profession she loved. Diane is survived by her husband, Mario I. Rendon, and her children, Adan and Renata Rendon.

RICHTER—Johan "John".



Johan "John" Richter, of Provincetown, MA, formerly of New York City and Springfield, MA, born on June 3, 1942, passed away on June 5, 2026. He leaves his wife, Margaret "Margo" Richter, daughters Elisabeth Verde and Mary Richter (Dina Barker), his grandson, Jack Verde, and four siblings. Services will be at Nickerson Funeral Home, Wellfleet, MA. For online condolences please visit www.nickersonfunerals.com

ROSENTHAL—Janice.

Janice Rosenthal passed peacefully at home in Manhattan on June 3, 2026 at age 96. See Legacy.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF DEATHS MAY BE TELEPHONED FROM WITHIN NYC TO 212-556-3900; OR OUTSIDE NYC TOLL FREE 1-800-458-5522; OR SENT BY EMAIL TO NYTIMES@CLASSIFIEDSPLUS.COM FOR THE FOLLOWING EDITIONS Until 2:00 P.M. the day before for Monday through Saturday editions, until 4:00 P.M. on Friday for Sunday's National Edition, until 12:45 P.M. Saturday for Sunday's New York and late National editions. Photos must be submitted by noon the day prior to publication Tuesday through Friday. Photos for Saturday, Sunday and Monday must be submitted by 12 noon on Friday.

SHAPIRO—Adam J.

Adam J. Shapiro, on June 9, 2026, from cancer at age 55. Beloved husband of Pam Wasserstein. Loving father of Eli and Arthur. Cherished son of Iris and Floyd. Devoted brother of Lisa Lerman (Larry), Lainie Gilbert (Richard) and Julie Epstein (Eric). Proud uncle of many nieces and nephews. He leaves behind a wide circle of extended family and dear friends, and many esteemed partners, colleagues and clients from his 29-year career at Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz. In his personal and professional life, he was a profoundly tenacious, loyal and thoughtful ally and advocate - the best man to have in your corner. Dedicated and meticulous, he loved serving as a mentor to generations of colleagues, and was happiest when spending time with his treasured sons. He will be deeply missed. The family will be holding a private remembrance. Contributions in his honor may be made to: The Food Bank for New York City; the Cancer Research Institute, where Adam was a board member; or Weill Cornell Medicine, Melanoma Program Fund, Attn: maw2029@med.cornell.edu.

SHAPIRO—Adam J.
The partners, associates, and staff of Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz deeply mourn the untimely passing of our dear partner, colleague, and friend Adam J. Shapiro. Adam was truly one of a kind. He was one of the finest lawyers of his generation — brilliant in his thinking, thoughtful in his advocacy, steadfast in support of his clients. Yet what set him apart, and what matters most to those of us who knew him, was his extraordinary and genuine warmth and generosity. He was, by any measure, one of the kindest and most decent human beings any of us has ever had the privilege of knowing. Adam was a wise confidant, a committed mentor to many, and a true friend to all at the Firm. His door was always open, his counsel was always offered generously, and his friendship was one of life's great gifts. Adam was devoted to and loved our Firm deeply. He embodied everything that Wachtell Lipton stands for — the commitment to excellence, the collegiality, the culture of the Firm as family. Above all, Adam was a wonderful husband, father, son, and brother. We send our deepest sympathies to his beloved wife Pam, his adored sons Eli and Arthur, his loving parents and devoted sisters, and the rest of his family. We share in your profound loss and will miss Adam terribly, but he will live on in all the lives he touched so deeply.

SHAPIRO—Adam J.
We are deeply saddened by the loss of Adam. We will miss his sense of humor, his kindness, his brilliance and his friendship. We will miss the times we spent together and the laughs we shared. We will always cherish our memories. Our thoughts are with Pam, Eli, Arthur, Adam's parents and sisters.
Josh Cammaker,
Andy & Darcy Nussbaum,
Michael & Susan Katzke

TISCH—Wilma.
The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum mourns the passing of Museum Founder Billie Tisch. A respected leader and philanthropist, Billie was an early supporter of the Museum. Along with her late husband Laurence, a former member of the Museum's governing Council, she was deeply committed to promoting Holocaust education and its important lessons for future generations. The Museum sends heartfelt condolences to her sons James, Andrew, Daniel and Thomas and their respective wives Merryl (a former member of the Museum's Council), Ann, Bonnie, and Alice; her grandchildren, great-grandchildren and the entire Tisch family.
Jeffrey L. Miller,
Council Chairman
Allan M. Holt,
Council Vice Chairman
Sara J. Bloomfield,
Museum Director

TISCH— Wilma "Billie".
Trustees and staff of The Jewish Board extend their heartfelt condolences to our Trustee, Alice Tisch, her husband Tom, and their entire family on the loss of Tom's mother, Billie Tisch. Known for her dedication to family and community, Billie shaped, and was deeply engaged in, New York's nonprofit world; many organizations, and hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers have benefited from her leadership and generosity. Billie's legacy of family, community, and philanthropy will long endure through her children, grandchildren, and their families.

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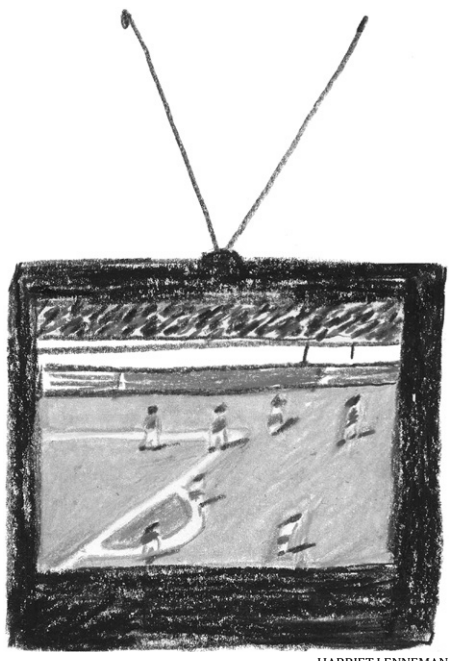
Opinion

The New York Times

It's Not the 1994 World Cup, but It's Something

Joshua Jelly-Schapiro
A geographer and writer who edited a series of essays about the 2018 World Cup for The New York Review of Books.

This year's soccer tournament offers a chance at a mighty form of communion.



HARRIET LENNEMAN

IT'S not easy to explain, to kids growing up today surrounded by screens and viral videos, the epiphanic force with which the men's World Cup landed on American TV in 1994. It certainly did on the old Magnavox TV in my parents' house in northern New England's woods. Like many American kids in the waning years of the Cold War, I spent my Saturday mornings kicking a ball around American fields. I had joined a travel team whose sponsor's logo ("CABOT: Cheese from Vermont") vied for space with Adidas on our chests. But I'd never seen the game played at the highest level — until 1994.

To live in range of ABC's coverage of the games that summer was to glimpse the world's finest players and best-loved teams. It was also to be treated to vivid and at times incongruous tableaux of ethnic fervor and comity, involving not merely those teams but their impassioned fans, too. They filled America's biggest arenas — green-clad Nigerians and sombrero-wearing Mexicans, Swedes in Viking hats and Argentines singing songs about Diego Maradona. Feelings of national rivalry and pride occasioned not war but play.

To take in those games, as ABC's commentators informed us, was to watch telecasts also being absorbed by billions of other humans — and to participate in the world.

In 2026, the world doesn't look like we hoped it might from the sunny vantage of the early 1990s, when history still felt like it was moving in a positive direction. The United States, which seemed destined to be increasingly open-minded, is more closed off. But the return of the World Cup, a competition founded in the same era as the League of Nations and involving a sport that Americans have now learned to love, will still channel conflicts between countries into "peaceful contests in the stadium," as Jules Rimet, the man who masterminded the competition, once put it. As important, it will offer us all a chance to experience, even if just for a moment, a mighty form of communion.

In 1994, the Cold War was over and America — notwithstanding Washington's frequently awful proxy wars in developing countries — was admired as the global paragon of democracy and the rule of law. But the sporting culture in the United States was insular and jingoistic. It was defined by sports that Americans evolved from the games of our colonial masters: Gridiron football was a more dynamic and violent form of English rugby; baseball was an American riff on cricket. Americans took pride in the fact that few others in the world cared about or played our "national pastime."

Association Football — a game with ancient global roots but whose modern form was, like rugby and cricket, codified in England — became the globe's game thanks to factors both of history and of form. The British Empire brought British sailors, engineers and miners to the world's ports. The game they played by wharves from Buenos Aires to Accra to Hong Kong was embraced by people who founded clubs in those cities and a thousand more. Soccer became the 20th century's pre-eminent way for people around the world to hail, as the soccer historian David Goldblatt put it, "the miracle of our own solidarities."

Except in the United States — until 1994, anyway. That summer's World Cup was the best-attended and most-watched tournament that soccer's worldwide governing body, FIFA, had ever staged. This was the goal. FIFA and its partners, among them some of the world's biggest companies and media conglomerates, aimed to make the globe's best-loved sport a big business in the world's richest market.

In the 32 years since the 1994 World Cup, the dreams of FIFA and its corporate cronies have in large part come to pass. We follow the world's top leagues on TV, and our women's team are worldbeaters. Soccer, according to one recent poll, has surpassed baseball as Americans' third-favorite sport. Among teens, it comes close to rivaling the N.B.A. for hearts and eyeballs.

Now the World Cup is back. Since 1994, the reputations of both the United States and FIFA have taken some profound dings. FIFA's corruption was never exactly a secret, but has now been exposed to the world. President Trump's contempt for the rule of law and international norms has done vast damage to America's global standing and American society alike.

The reason FIFA's flagship event has returned to the world's richest country, this time sharing hosting duties with our North American neighbors and cosignatories to NAFTA, the former treaty that Mr. Trump loved to hate, is the same reason that Gianni Infantino, FIFA's unctuous current head, expanded this World Cup from 32 nations to 48: cash.

This is the world as it is. But we'll be watching regardless. In 1994, we thrilled to Romario's balletic goals for Brazil; in 2026, we'll wonder if Kylian Mbappé's mercurial French team can pull together and if the great Lionel Messi of Argentina has one more "mundial" in him. We'll cheer along for smaller nations, from Haiti to Jordan to Cape Verde, hoping they can notch even a single, glorious win.

This year's final will be staged on July 19 in New Jersey's MetLife Stadium, whose turf played host in 1994 to a memorable match between Italy and Ireland. It was filled to bursting with immigrants' kids bellowing their love for the old countries in the new one where they'd made good.

We tuned in then, and we will tune in now — to hundreds of matches across the continent. And we'll know that what happens on their fields will model, as only a World Cup can, the world as we want it.

The Bipartisan Hatred of All Things Feminine

Jessica Grose
An Opinion writer covering family, religion, education, culture and the way we live now.

Some liberals are aping the Republican-style aversion to anything womanly.

ELEANOR DAVIS

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S cabinet has been breathtakingly incompetent and horribly destructive, but the members who are suffering the biggest consequences seem to be women.

Kristi Noem, the secretary of homeland security; Pam Bondi, the attorney general; and Lori Chavez-DeRemer, the labor secretary, either were fired or stepped down under pressure this year; Mr. Trump picked men to fill their spots. Beyond cabinet positions in the second Trump administration, only 12 percent of Senate-confirmed appointees are women.

Mr. Trump's second term in office has been less volatile than his first, and some high-profile men have been canned. Nonetheless, some of the women hired to run large parts of the federal government have already flamed out.

I don't mourn the loss of their service, but the anti-woman bias of many in our current leadership is overt and constant, and it will have lasting effects on female political achievement — not just for Republicans.

Pete Hegseth, the secretary of defense, has gone out of his way to demean women in the military and block their promotions, and the founder of his religious denomination thinks women with husbands shouldn't be allowed to vote. Mr. Trump attacks the female reporters who ask him tough questions, commenting on or criticizing their looks — just recently he stomped out of an interview with NBC's Kristen Welker, telling her, "You're either crooked or you're stupid."

But Mr. Trump and his cronies aren't content just to put down actual women. Anyone whose behavior is deemed insufficiently manly is trashed. James Talarico, the mild-mannered seminarian Democrat who is running for a Senate seat in Texas, has been called "James Talafreako" by his opponent, the corrupt Republican Ken Paxton, in part because Mr. Talarico has embraced meat alternatives. The Trump henchman Stephen Miller has gone further, repeatedly claiming that Mr. Talarico is "transitioning" to female on both Fox News and his X account.

If that weren't awful enough, some leftists and liberals seem to be aping Republican-style insults, implying that anything outside an old-fashioned vision of masculine behavior is weak and womanly and should be avoided. In response to new revelations about the Maine Senate hopeful Graham Platner's past relationships, a prominent progressive, Matt Stoller, defended him, posting on X that "Graham Platner represents a rejection of Dem HR lady politics." Which is to say, any objection to Mr. Platner's history is somehow coded as female.

This defense tactic from Mr. Platner's staunchest supporters is not new. Moira Donegan, writing in The Guardian in October, noted that many liberal men loudly defended Mr. Platner then, in spite of his Nazi tattoos and his Reddit comments about women and minorities, on the ground that the party had become too feminized. "The idea is that in catering too much to women, and in being insufficiently deferential to domineering, gruff, physically imposing and implicitly white, rural men, the party has come to seem hectoring, inauthentic and whiny, and lost the voters they need to most recruit."

If I lived in Maine, I would certainly vote for Mr. Platner over Susan Collins in a general election, so that Democrats can have a chance to take back the Senate and oppose Mr. Trump. I also understand why people are excited about Mr. Platner's progressive stances and his ability to connect in person, and I get the calculus around choosing him as the nominee among the other options.

But it isn't even true that it's "Dem HR lady politics" to look askance at his behavior — according to Gallup polling from 2025, 89 percent of Americans think adultery in a marriage is morally wrong, and Republicans and independents are more likely to think it's morally wrong than Democrats. Adultery is not just a subject of interest to women.

While I know that Mr. Trump has broken our sense of ethics when it comes to political behavior, it's actually pretty normie and not especially feminine to worry that Mr. Platner's sexting as many as a dozen other women while married could be a liability for him in a general election, and to wonder if there are going to be other shoes dropping for him in the next few months.

I also find it impossible to believe that a female, gay or nonwhite politician with Mr. Platner's background would be given the amount of grace that he is receiving. Gretchen Whitmer, the governor of Michigan, got dragged across the internet last year for simply holding a folder in front of her face in the Oval Office, with one headline asking, "How Politically Devastating Is the Blue Folder Picture?" and some speculating that her future in politics was basically over.

It is profoundly depressing to see people on both sides imply that only "masculine" behavior, defined in the narrowest, most chest-thumping way, is worthy of power and respect, and the only way to win elections. It makes the expectations for female candidates even more onerous and complicated. I don't think it's a coincidence that in the past year, the few female Democrats — Governor Mikie Sherrill of New Jersey, Governor Abigail Spanberger of Virginia and the New Jersey congressional hopeful Rebecca Bennett — who have been able to break through tend to have traditionally masculine career backgrounds in the military or the C.I.A.

I called Amanda Litman, the president of Run for Something, an organization that recruits young progressive candidates like Mr. Talarico to run for office, to ask her if she was seeing some of the same barriers for female candidates that I have noticed. "I think one of the broader challenges is that we do not have a definition of authentic or compelling that includes women," she said. And the second a female Democrat does eke out a place for herself, Ms. Litman added, the right-wing media ecosystem makes her into a monster, the way it has with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Kamala Harris and Nancy Pelosi.

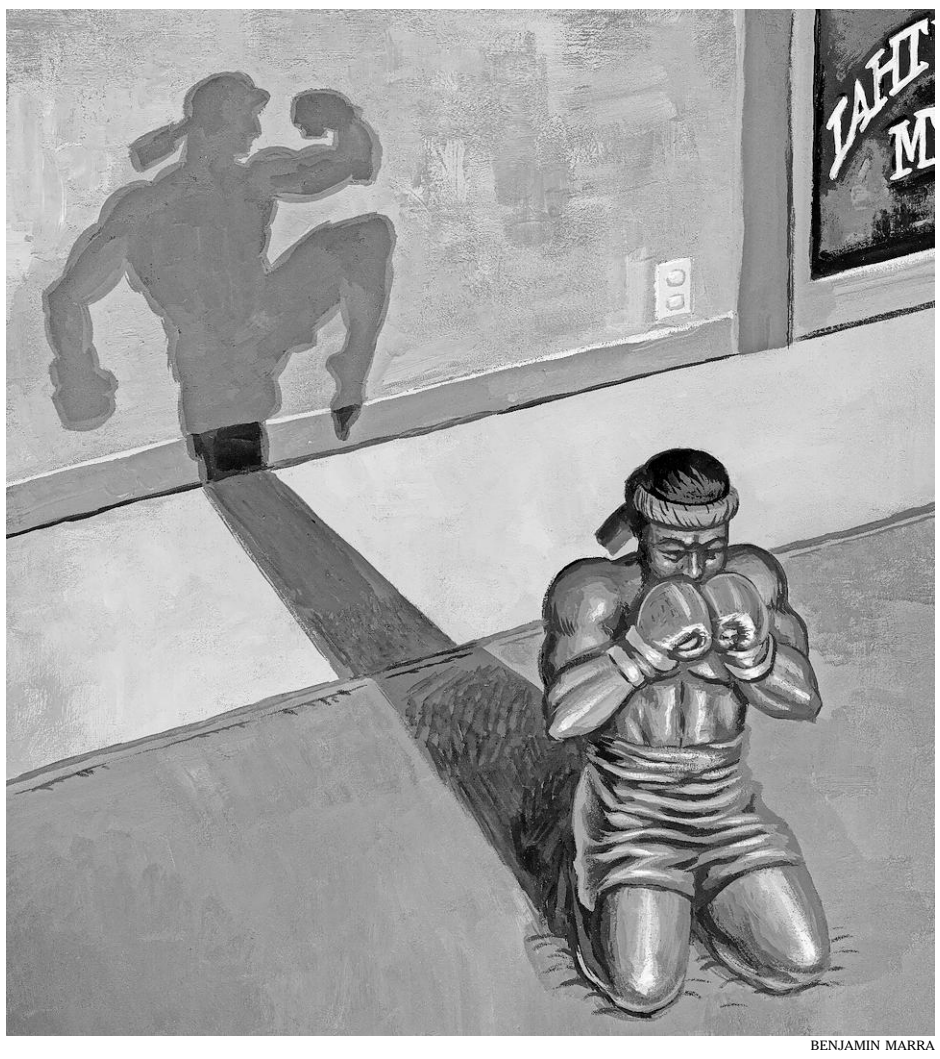
I am generally optimistic about the state of gender relations in this country. But I am not feeling bullish on female politicians gaining real power on the national level in the near future.

We're still more than two years out from the next presidential election, but none of The Washington Post's "standout" candidates on either the left or the right are women. On "Pod Save America," a podcast hosted by former Obama administration staffers, the co-host Dan Pfeiffer recently came to a similar conclusion, saying, "You could end up with an all-male field, which would be kind of gross in 2028."

It may be gross, but it's also a logical conclusion, if you're paying attention. If we've defined authentic power as male, then there's no way for a woman to claim it.

My Life Lessons From M.M.A. Fighting

Matthew Denton-Edmundson
A professor of creative writing and the author of the forthcoming novel "Reclamation."



BENJAMIN MARRA

ON PRESIDENT TRUMP'S 80th birthday this Sunday, professional fighters are scheduled to attempt to beat each other up on the South Lawn of the White House in a newly erected arena called the Claw. There's even been talk that the fighters might emerge from the Oval Office, then do battle in an event featuring a shower of patriotic fireworks.

I teach at a state university in Boise, Idaho, a town that's a blue dot in a red state, and most of my friends and colleagues, as well as most people on my social media feeds, are already horrified by the prospect of this coming spectacle. I get it. But what many of my friends don't know is that, for several years now, on Saturday mornings, I say goodbye to my wife and kid, head to Straight Blast Gym, lace up 16-ounce gloves and trade uppercuts and body kicks with a group of highly accomplished fighters. I'm training in muay Thai, one of several fighting styles commonly used in mixed martial arts.

In my social circles, muay Thai and M.M.A. are often imagined as the sole territory of disgruntled and possibly deranged males in their early 20s and divorced dads who mainline Joe Rogan. Picturing my gym, my friends most likely imagine a basement with bare lightbulbs and Tyler Durden intoning, "The first rule of Fight Club is. . . . "

They're not totally wrong to have that impression. There is an overtly macho element to combat sports: the trash talk and posturing, the slugfests and blood-on-the-mat fights. In my experience, lots of young men are interested in learning how to fight. Maybe these men don't want to feel vulnerable or weak in a world that feels full of threats. A few of them — though none I've ever met — might even aspire to fashion themselves into hyper-alpha males modeled on the likes of Andrew Tate, the former kickboxer, self-avowed misogynist and manosphere influencer who's been accused of human trafficking.

I do think it's true that many young men crave a sense of confidence but struggle to find ways of cultivating it. And they may become attracted to messages that explain away their feelings of inadequacy: *It's feminists, it's liberals, it's my teachers, it's my boss*. They may even come to idolize the kind of aggression and macho bravado that ultimate fighting offers, and that our president deploys in business, politics, international relations and, yes, the promotion of over-the-top M.M.A. events.

When I first walked into a fight gym, I'd recently moved across the country to a new city, for my wife's job, and I was feeling a bit unmoored. I confess that I fantasized a little bit about a reborn version of myself — lean and dangerous, somebody not to be messed with. But that's not quite what I've found while training, and it's not why I've stuck with muay Thai. Instead, the sport has helped me in ways I never expected. I've learned that legitimate fight gyms offer an alternative vision for what men ought to be.

Like other difficult sports, muay Thai teaches you that purpose and pride can be earned through hard work — and that you are responsible for building your own confidence by pushing your physical and mental limits. Muay Thai training has also given me a sense of poise and tempered confidence I don't think I could have found anywhere else.

Not long ago, my wife and I had our first child and, in the months after his birth, the stress and sleeplessness started to get to me. There were moments when I felt anger and frustration rising — most often at myself, at how much work having an infant turned out to be, and how unprepared I felt. Each time this happened, I recalled an exercise we do at the gym called a flinch drill: A partner rains down punches on you while you do your utmost to remain calm and watchful behind your guard, parrying and blocking whenever possible. Because of that drill, I'd learned to use breath work and mindfulness to alleviate my stress response. In the most difficult moments of early parenthood, that's exactly what I did.

People might imagine combat sports as all about anger, brutality and aggression. But being calm under fire — calm always — is one of the first attributes taught in muay Thai. Composure is valued above all else, and respect for one's rivals is close behind. For this reason, accomplished fighters are well prepared to keep their cool.

Muay Thai taught me to handle the hardest moments of parenthood.

I don't tend to bring up fighting at the playground or around the college, partly because I'm wary of being seen in a negative light — as a bit of a brute, even — and partly also because I know such judgment isn't wholly unjustified. It's true that certain men let their abilities in the ring go to their head. I admit that on occasion I've found myself fantasizing about testing my martial skills (such as they are) outside the gym — teaching a lesson to some guy who dared to say the wrong thing to me or my wife. And there are invariably one or two guys at every gym who are out for blood every time they spar, no matter the skill level of their partner. Muay Thai trainers sometimes refer to this behavior disapprovingly as "ego sparring."

But fight gyms also have a way of cutting egos down to size. Just when you start thinking a bit too much of yourself, you end up toe-to-toe with a skinny teenager who can easily put you on the ground. There's always someone around who can outmatch brawn with calm and technical prowess.

There's a tradition I've encountered in my muay Thai training that's notably different from the bravado that surrounds the Ultimate Fighting Championship and the kind of pomp that will most certainly be in full force at Mr. Trump's White House fights. Before serious and professional matches, muay Thai fighters do a formal dance around the ring called a wai khru, which involves a meditative swaying and movements meant to evoke and honor tigers and other animals.

The purpose of performing the wai khru, beyond its aesthetic appeal, is to pay respect to teachers and parents, and to remind the fighters and audience that the contest is a form of ritualized violence, a way of expelling aggressive impulses while building, rather than undermining, community feeling. While I'll occasionally watch an M.M.A. fight, I've become a devoted follower of the professional muay Thai circuit, based out of Rajadamnern Stadium in Thailand, and I always enjoy watching the dances that precede the bouts.

The dance is not necessarily what anyone in the Western world, or the so-called manosphere, would call macho. I doubt the White House M.M.A. fights will involve any such ritual or reverence, or any appeal to the notion of a calm and centered self. So if you're put off by the prospect of cage fights on the White House lawn, fair enough.

But don't dismiss the skill and dedication of the fighters themselves. The growing popularity of combat sport gyms is, to my mind, a great thing. My spirits are buoyed every time I show up to Saturday morning practice and find a room full of young men and women who are serious about making something better out of themselves. If there really is a crisis of masculinity, as the headlines would have us believe, muay Thai is part of the solution, not the problem.

LETTERS

Should the Public Get a Piece of A.I. Wealth?

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "A.I. Belongs to the People, Not to Billionaires," by Bernie Sanders (Opinion guest essay, June 3):

Senator Sanders argues that "the people" should be compensated for their contributions in training artificial intelligence and have "a direct role in determining the future of this technology." But a federal sovereign wealth fund, which he proposes, is a disguise for more government control and can be supported only by those who think the government knows best.

He points to sovereign wealth funds built on oil revenues as a model. But oil and A.I. are fundamentally different. While oil is a finite natural resource, A.I. is an evolving technology whose value depends on continued innovation and investment. You cannot regulate a breakthrough the way you regulate a barrel of crude.

Mr. Sanders says his proposal would give Americans a stake in the future of A.I. In practice, it would give that stake to the government. Ownership and decision-making rights would revert to public officials. The answer for a prosperous future is not concentrated government power.

MARIO OTTERO, WASHINGTON

The writer is the emergent technology policy analyst at Americans for Prosperity.

TO THE EDITOR:

Senator Bernie Sanders's proposal to give the public an ownership stake in America's top A.I. companies is quite alarming. He is not simply advocating a sovereign wealth fund that would help the public capture the benefits of A.I.-generated growth. Those funds normally take small stakes in many companies; Mr. Sanders wants the government to take a major stake in industry leaders, giving it both a share of profits and the power to dictate the company's behavior.

Unlike the normal left-of-center policies Republicans misconstrue as socialism, government ownership of private enterprise is the textbook definition of it. And how do we know it will stop with A.I.? Mr. Sanders's claim that the government deserves a stake in companies "built on the collective knowledge" could apply to any business that iterates on government-funded research or uses public infrastructure — which is ultimately almost all of them.

The timing of the proposal is particularly perplexing. Donald Trump has already taken direct stakes in some 20 companies, including U.S. Steel and Intel, in return for favorable policy decisions. Do American leftists really want to suggest officially giving his proto-authoritarian regime control of our most influential businesses? It's a dangerous, half-baked proposal that no liberal should support.

BEN RITZ, ARLINGTON, VA.

The writer is the vice president for policy development at the Progressive Policy Institute.

Trump's Enablers

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "Trump Nominates His Former Personal Lawyer to Be Attorney General" (news article, June 9) and "How Lindsey Graham Has Tried to Outrun His Past Criticism of Trump" (nytimes.com, June 8):

Your reports about Todd Blanche and Lindsey Graham are a reminder that one of the underpinnings of the current Trump administration has been the willingness of various officials to abandon any principles they may have once had in their pursuit of proximity to power.

Many of the depredations that President Trump has committed during his second term would not have been possible without the support of these shameless enablers.

History will not treat these officials kindly.

MICHAEL SILK
LAGUNA WOODS, CALIF.

TO THE EDITOR:

Senator Bernie Sanders argues for the creation of a sovereign wealth fund. This misstates the purpose of these funds and the reasons that countries such as Norway, which Mr. Sanders mentioned, created their funds.

Norway's fund was created to avoid what economists call "the Dutch disease," which occurs when a surge in natural resource exports causes a nation's currency to appreciate so much that traditional exports become uncompetitive. The fund absorbs the purchases and currency flows and redeploys the capital in a measured and gradual way so that the inflows do not dislocate the economy.

It is easy to look at the trillion-dollar funds of Saudi Arabia or Singapore with envy, but their funds act as a cushion for countries with more wealth than their economies can absorb. The United States, by contrast, is a large country with the deepest capital markets in the world to help fund major expenditures.

Mr. Sanders is right to be concerned about economic losses accruing to ordinary Americans because of A.I., but wrong in his solution.

JULIAN GRAHAM, WASHINGTON

The Times welcomes letters from readers. Letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Those selected may be edited, and shortened to fit allotted space. Email: letters@nytimes.com

The Global Bull Market Defies the Myth of American Exceptionalism

Liaquat Ahamed
The author of "Lords of Finance" and "1873: The Rothschilds, the First Great Depression, and the Making of the Modern World."

IN THE coverage of the genuinely broad-based global equity boom, an important detail is often overlooked: In the past 18 months, as that boom has reached what appears to be its peak, international markets have hugely outperformed the United States.

Since the beginning of 2025, equity markets have generated returns of 68 percent in emerging economies, 45 percent in Europe and 44 percent in Japan, while the U.S. equity market has been the laggard, generating returns of "only" 26 percent. If history is anything to go by, the massive I.P.O.s planned by Anthropic, SpaceX and OpenAI will probably continue to weigh upon the relative performance of the U.S. market.

Because the United States leads the global A.I. industry, the dominant narrative in financial markets is still about American exceptionalism. Many investors remain convinced that the United States is the singular engine of global capitalism and that its technological lead cannot be challenged. Why does this idea persist?

Some of it is historical. Foreign markets have lagged behind the United States for so long that we have learned to ignore them. While the U.S. market has been making new highs for years, European equities have only just reached the high that they set almost 20 years ago, in 2007, just before the global financial crisis. And the Nikkei in Japan finally eclipsed its 1989 bubble peak only in 2024 — a 35-year journey. Even the broad emerging market indexes, after two decades of treading water, have finally broken into new territory.

It was perhaps inevitable that at some point global markets would catch up. But the move in foreign markets has not simply been a matter of playing catch-up. Corporate profits and earnings were unusually strong across every major geographic region in 2025. This has a lot to do with the knock-on effects of the A.I. infrastructure construction boom that is occurring around the world. To understand why requires tracing where the money being spent on A.I. goes once it leaves the balance sheets of the U.S. technology companies driving the boom.

Many people treat A.I. as a purely American technology story. But the physical construction of artificial intelligence depends on a supply chain of extraordinary global complexity. At its core sits an unusual triumvirate: Nvidia's chip designs from California, ASML's precision lithography equipment from the Netherlands, and TSMC's manufacturing facilities in Taiwan, Japan, China and America — three companies that together control an overwhelming majority of advanced A.I. chip production.

Then there is memory. Every A.I. chip requires vast quantities of high-bandwidth memory made largely in South Korea, where SK Hynix alone commands a 57 percent share of the global market.

Powering the data centers themselves requires hardware that is, to a striking degree, European. France's Schneider Electric, Switzerland's ABB and their continental peers dominate the global market for the transformers, switching gear and energy management systems without which no data center operates. These are not peripheral vendors. They are the picks-and-shovels companies of the A.I. era — and they are headquartered near Paris and in Zurich, not Palo Alto.

The international earnings boom reaches beyond A.I. Take Japan. After decades of pressure from domestic reformers and foreign activist investors, Japan has experienced a structural transformation in its corporate culture. A new generation of Japanese executives has been willing to do what their predecessors refused: return capital to shareholders and dissolve the cross-shareholding arrangements that had entombed corporate balance sheets for generations.

Return on equity is now pursued as a genuine strategic goal rather than an afterthought. In Europe, Russia's invasion of Ukraine triggered a defense-spending renaissance across NATO that has proved a sustained earnings tailwind for aerospace and defense companies, and Germany's dramatic abandonment of its long-held fiscal austerity has begun injecting fresh stimulus across the continent.

Part of the reason the global nature of the bull market has been obscured is structural. The United States now represents roughly 65 percent of global equity market capitalization. When something is that large, it is easy to mistake the part for the whole. American financial media is, unsurprisingly, American. The indexes that pension funds and retail investors track — the S&P 500, the Nasdaq — are American. When those indexes move, it is news. When the Nikkei breaks a 35-year record, it barely earns a paragraph.

The U.S. economy retains enormous advantages compared with those of Europe and Japan. For example, because of its self-sufficiency in energy, it has a resilience that other regions of the world do not. That resilience has been most apparent in the three months since the start of the Iran war, allowing the U.S. market to do modestly better (5 percentage points) than Europe's and Japan's, which are more exposed to the vagaries of Middle East oil supply.

It remains true that the combination of deep capital markets, entrepreneurial dynamism and flexible labor markets gives American equities a structural advantage over other markets. That thesis has been repeatedly vindicated over the past 20 years. Investors who have bet against it have, more often than not, lost.

But after the past 18 months, it is important that we not go back to an overemphasis on the U.S. stock market to the exclusion of the rest of the world. For that would be a form of financial jingoism that leaves investors blind to the true scope of what is happening.

Bringing A.I. to fruition required more than just U.S. tech prowess.

MAX SLOBODDA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

No one doubts that American technology companies, with their unrivaled ability to marshal capital and talent, have turbocharged the A.I. revolution. But bringing A.I. to fruition has required more than just American technological prowess. It has required the semiconductors of TSMC and Samsung, the lithography machines of ASML, the power infrastructure of European engineering firms, the copper and rare earths extracted from emerging markets.

The bull market so many think they understand is smaller than the bull market that actually exists. The rest of the world has been writing one of the more remarkable chapters in modern financial history — and we have largely been too busy watching our own screens to notice.

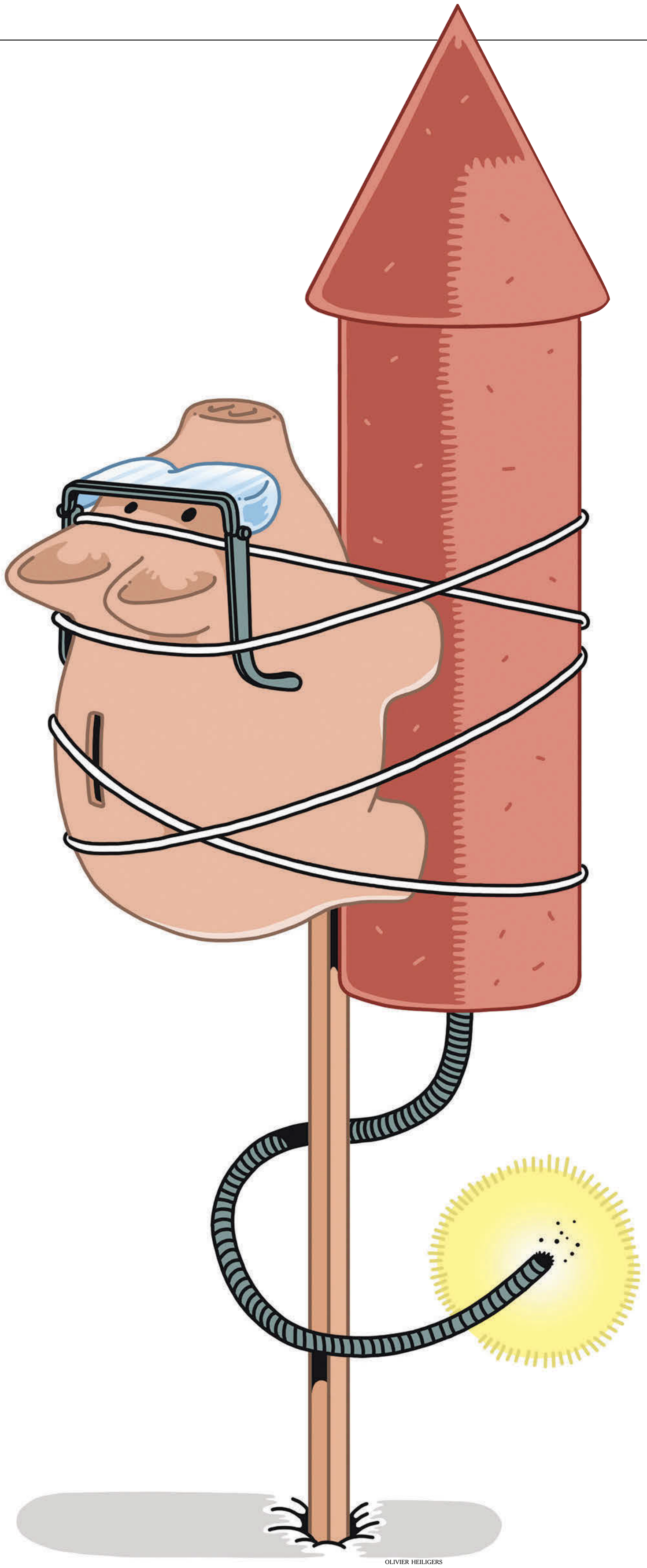
Escucharlos
es amarlos.
SOUND IT OUT
Encuentra maneras de
apoyar a tus hijos en
EscuchandoSentimientos.org
ad COUNCIL
pivotal

3 ECONOMY
Europe's central bank raises interest rates, saying it expected inflation to be worse than expected.

8 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
Jeff Bezos wants to build what he calls an "artificial general engineer" with his new start-up, Prometheus.

10 SPORTS
OG Anunoby carved his name among Knicks legends Wednesday night with a sprint, a leap and a tap.

Business
The New York Times



WALL ST. STRAPS IN FOR RIDE INTO I.P.O. HISTORY

Elon Musk's rocket company, SpaceX, on the cusp of the largest initial public offering ever, goes public today. Here's what you need to know.

THE BUY-IN
In the race to dominate the A.I. industry, companies are turning to investors after years of relying on their own profitability. Page B4.

THE PUSH
SpaceX is said to have pressured stock indexes to include its shares soon after the I.P.O., exposing many retirement accounts. Page B4.

THE QUESTIONS
SpaceX is giving everyday investors a much larger slice of its shares than is typical for an I.P.O. Want a piece of the action? Page B5.

THE EARLY INVESTOR
One Texas man spent 15 years amassing as much of SpaceX's privately held stock as possible. He stands to make $20 billion. Page B7.

YOUR MONEY
While investors are lining up for a chance to buy shares at the $135 opening price, there may be joy this time in missing out. Page B4.

THE MUSK MYSTIQUE
Tesla stock's stunning rise helped create an aura around Mr. Musk that has attracted fans on Wall Street and in Silicon Valley. Page B6.

OLIVIER HEILIGERS

The Digest

TECHNOLOGY

Oracle Spending Sends Its Shares Tumbling 12%

Oracle shares tumbled 12 percent on Thursday as surging spending and a ballooning debt load fanned investor concerns about the cash burn in the company's push to build out A.I. infrastructure.

If the losses persist, the stock would log its biggest one-day drop since January last year, wiping about $72 billion from the company's $578.83 billion market value.

A smaller player in the cloud-computing industry, Oracle has in recent months seized huge data-center deals with OpenAI and Meta to compete more forcefully with rivals, such as Amazon and Microsoft.

But Oracle lacks the large cash flows that have primarily funded the tech giants' outlays, forcing it to burn cash and sell debt instruments at a time its traditional software business is under pressure from the very A.I. tools it plans to support through its cloud.

The company said it expects net capital expenditure of around $70 billion in the fiscal year. *REUTERS*

ECONOMY

Producer Prices Spike, Fueled by Rise in Oil Costs

JENNY KANE/ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. producer prices climbed last month at the fastest pace since November 2022, fueled by a surge in energy prices after the start of the Iran war.

The Labor Department reported Thursday that its Producer Price Index — which captures inflation before it reaches consumers — jumped 6.5 percent from May 2025. It rose 1.1 percent from April, as it did the previous month. Wholesale gasoline prices surged by more than 23 percent from April to May, and nearly 70 percent from a year earlier.

Inflationary pressures, intensified by the energy shock caused by the war on Iran, are frustrating Americans five months before midterm elections that will determine whether Republicans will keep full control of Congress.

Gas prices have been falling in recent days, but the cost of a gallon of regular gas has been above $4 since March, according to AAA. *ASSOCIATED PRESS*

I.P.O.

Kardigan Seeks Valuation Of $1.4 Billion in Debut

The clinical-stage biotech Kardigan is targeting a valuation of up to $1.4 billion in its initial public offering in the United States, it said on Thursday, as the company seeks funding to advance the development of three late-stage cardiovascular drug candidates.

The developer of precision medicines for cardiovascular diseases is seeking to raise up to $373.3 million by offering 23.3 million shares priced between $14 and $16 each.

The I.P.O. comes as the biotech market shows signs of recovery, with investors returning to health care companies that have advanced clinical programs and clearer paths toward commercialization.

Kardigan plans to use the proceeds, along with existing cash, to fund clinical development of the three drugs, danicamtiv, ataciguat and tonlamarsen, as well as for other research. *REUTERS*

S&P 500 INDEX
+1.8%
7,394.30

DOW JONES INDUSTRIALS
+1.9%
50,848.75

NASDAQ COMPOSITE INDEX
+2.5%
25,809.66

10-YEAR TREASURY YIELD
4.45%
–0.092 points

CRUDE OIL (U.S.)
$87.71
–$2.32

GOLD (N.Y.)
$4,114.00
–$19.30

Stocks & Bonds

Oil Prices Drop as Trump Reverses Threat to Strike Iran

By The New York Times

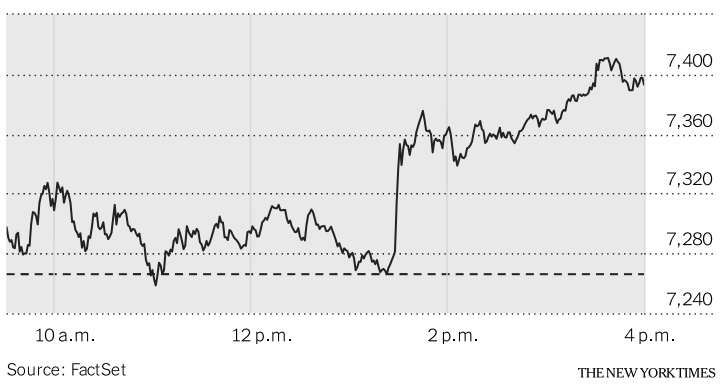
Oil prices slid on Thursday after President Trump backed down from threats of further attacks on Iran and claimed that a peace agreement was close.

Oil prices had already been volatile Thursday morning after the United States and Iran exchanged fire for a second straight day, and Mr. Trump threatened further attacks would come that evening, heightening fears that the two countries could slide back into broader conflict.

But Mr. Trump's abrupt shift in tone prompted a sharp reaction in financial markets. Stocks lurched higher and government bond yields fell.

The S&P 500 Index

Position of the S&P 500 index at 1-minute intervals on Thursday



Source: FactSet THE NEW YORK TIMES

Oil prices seesaw.

- The price of Brent crude, the global benchmark for oil, fell more than 4 percent in late afternoon trading, having settled earlier in the day down 2.9 percent at $90.38 a barrel.
- West Texas Intermediate crude, the U.S. benchmark, settled 2.6 percent lower at $87.71 a barrel, later extending its decline to more than 4 percent.
- Oil prices trade almost continuously, with a settlement price recorded each day to "settle" derivatives contracts tied to the price of oil.
- Investors and analysts are focused on the continued disruption to shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway between Iran and Oman that is a vital trading route for oil and natural gas that normally carries as much as one-fifth of the world's oil supply.
- Despite the escalating tensions, oil markets had remained relatively subdued in recent days, showing little reaction since the downing of a U.S. Army Apache helicopter near the Strait of Hormuz on Monday.

Stocks rise.

- The S&P 500 ended Thursday 1.8 percent higher after a volatile trading session. The move comes after two days of losses.
- Stocks in Asia, where countries import vast quantities of oil and gas, were little changed at the end of the trading day, with shares in Taiwan posting a small decline while stocks in Japan and South Korea recorded modest gains.
- In Europe, stocks rose. The Stoxx 600, a broad index that tracks the region's largest companies, ended the day up half a percent.

Gasoline prices pull back.

- U.S. gasoline prices edged lower on Thursday to a U.S. national average of $4.13 a gallon, according to the AAA motor club. Gas prices have risen 39 percent since the war began.
- Gas prices don't move in lock step with crude, usually trailing increases or drops by a few days.
- The average price of diesel dropped to $5.28 but is up 40 percent since the war's start.

Inflation is 'taking on a life of its own.'

- Diane Swonk, the chief economist at KPMG US, warned that accelerating inflation related to the war n Iran had put the Federal Reserve in a difficult spot. "Delaying rate hikes is riskier today than it was as the economy emerged from the pandemic," she wrote. "Inflation has lingered longer and shows signs of taking on a life of its own."

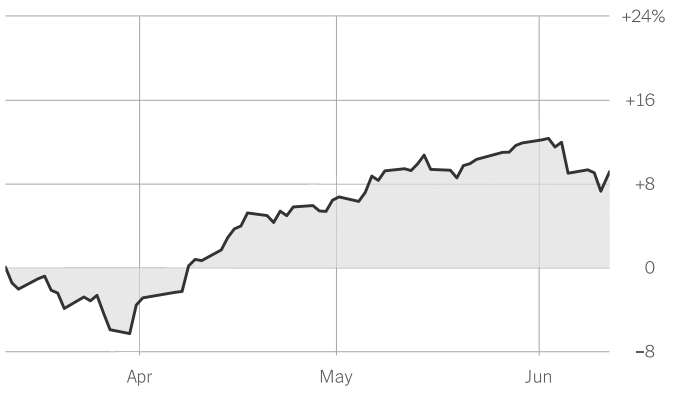
"We are now five years into the post-pandemic bout of inflation," she noted. "The Federal Reserve did not cause all of it, but it is the institution charged with bringing it down." Despite the political pressure on Kevin Warsh, who recently took over as Fed chair, to cut interest rates, Ms. Swonk expects officials at the central bank to be persuaded to raise rates later this year.

- "There are, of course, other factors that can derail the market independently of what's happening in the Persian Gulf, with the post-I.P.O. success of the SpaceX's stock being the most prominent factor to watch," Thierry Wizman and Gareth Berry, global strategists at Macquarie Asset Management, wrote on Thursday.

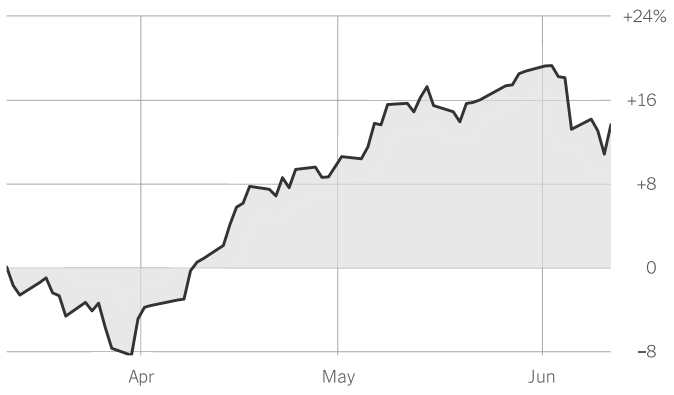
What Happened in Stock Markets Yesterday

POWERED BY FACTSET

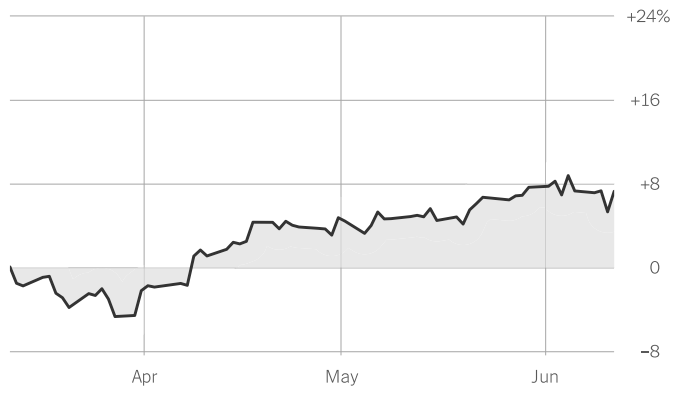
S&P 500 7,394.30 ↑ +1.8%
3 month performance: **+9.1%**



Nasdaq Composite Index 25,809.66 ↑ +2.5%
3 month performance: **+13.6%**



Dow Jones Industrials 50,848.75 ↑ +1.9%
3 month performance: **+7.2%**



Best performers

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE
1. SANDISK (SNDK)	$1,881.51	+14.5%
2. KLA Corp. (KLAC)	$2,411.64	+12.9
3. Lam Research (LRCX)	$362.52	+12.7
4. Micron Technology (MU)	$995.87	+11.7
5. Applied Materials (AMAT)	$552.64	+11.2
6. EchoStar 'A' (SATS)	$128.13	+11.2
7. International Paper (IP)	$34.95	+9.7
8. Teradyne (TER)	$381.40	+9.7
9. Smurfit WestRock (SW)	$42.69	+9.6
10. United Airlines Holdings (UAL)	$112.61	+9.6

Worst performers

S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE
1. PTC Inc. (PTC)	$118.39	–12.4%
2. Oracle (ORCL)	$184.10	–8.5
3. Autodesk (ADSK)	$205.57	–7.1
4. GoDaddy (GDDY)	$75.17	–6.4
5. Adobe (ADBE)	$218.80	–6.2
6. Workday (WDAY)	$130.53	–5.0
7. FactSet Research Systems (FDS)	$236.64	–5.0
8. CoStar Group (CSGP)	$32.65	–4.6
9. Devon Energy (DVN)	$44.61	–4.3
10. Gartner (IT)	$148.81	–3.9

Most active

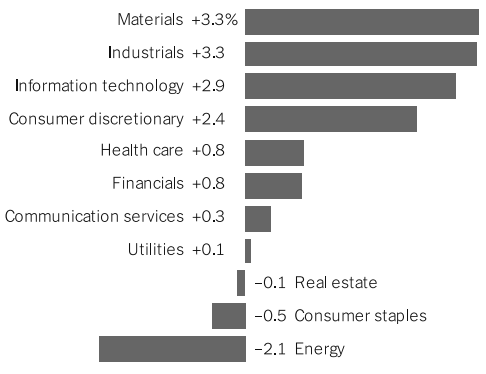
S&P 500 COMPANIES	CLOSE	CHANGE	VOLUME IN MIL.
1. Super Micro Computer (SMCI)	$31.97	+9.2%	247
2. Intel (INTC)	$116.96	+9.3	184
3. NVIDIA (NVDA)	$204.87	+2.2	154
4. Oracle (ORCL)	$184.10	–8.5	63
5. Micron Technology (MU)	$995.87	+11.7	58
6. Microsoft (MSFT)	$390.34	–1.8	46
7. Ford Motor (F)	$14.71	+2.9	46
8. Pfizer Inc. (PFE)	$26.17	+2.2	45
9. Tesla (TSLA)	$399.15	+4.6	44
10. Apple (AAPL)	$295.63	+1.4	42

International bonds

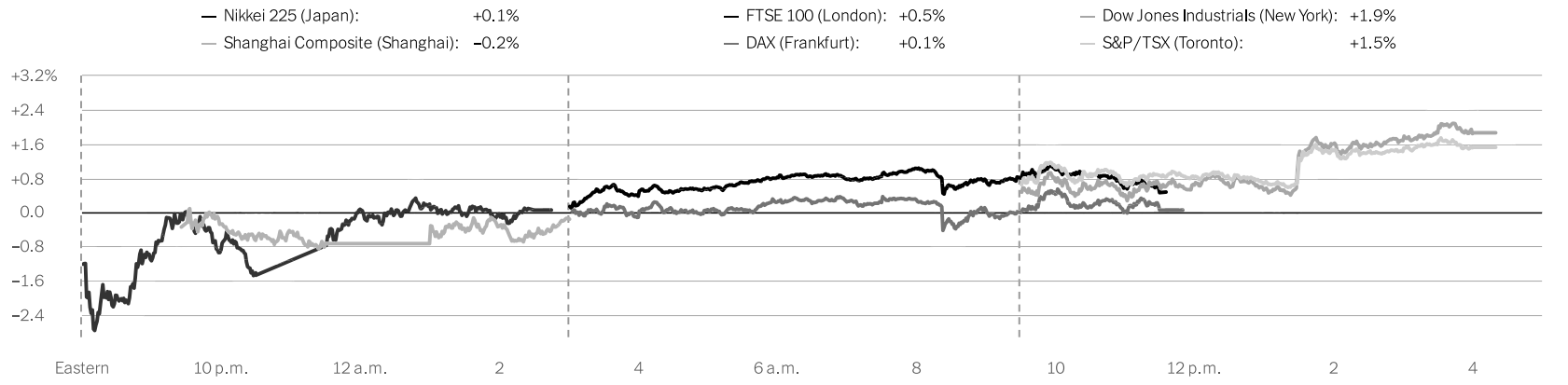
	TOTAL RETURN 1 YR	TOTAL RETURN 5 YRS	TOTAL ASSETS IN BIL.
1. Six Circles Global Bond Fund (CGLBX)	+3.0%	+1.5%	18.2
2. American Funds Capital World Bond Fund Class R-6 (RCWGX)	+3.2	–1.8	10.0
3. Dodge & Cox Global Bond Fund Class I (DODLX)	+7.2	+3.1	5.2
4. The Hartford World Bond Fund Class A (HWDAX)	+3.6	+1.6	4.5
5. Templeton Global Bond Fund Class R6 (FBNRX)	+8.2	+0.0	3.0
6. PGIM Global Total Return Fund - Class R6 (PGTQX)	+4.4	–1.1	2.6
7. Invesco Global Strategic Income Fund Class R6 (OSIIX)	+6.4	+1.9	1.7
8. Invesco International Bond Fund Class R6 (OIBIX)	+8.4	+1.0	1.6
9. BrandywineGLOBAL - Global Opportunities Bond Fund Class A (GOBAX)	+5.0	–2.4	1.2
10. PIMCO International Bond Fund (Unhedged) Class I-3 (PFUNX)	+2.1	–2.4	1.2

Source: Morningstar

Sector performance
S&P 500 SECTORS

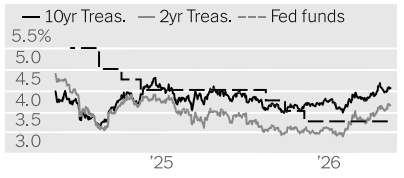


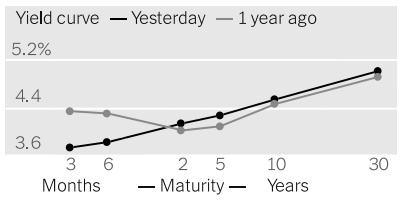
How stock markets fared yesterday in Asia ...



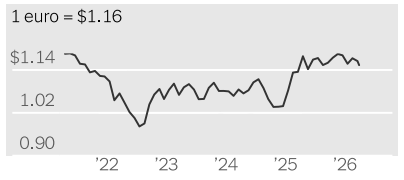
What Is Happening in Other Markets and the Economy

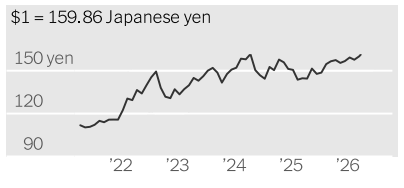
Bonds



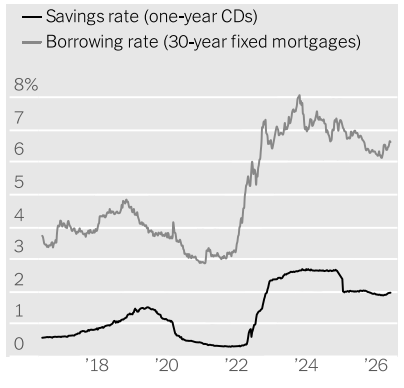


Currencies

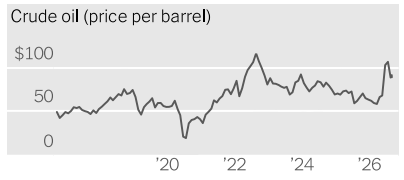


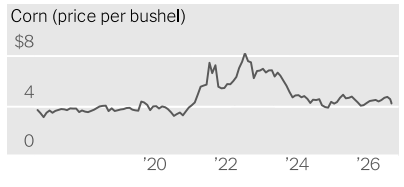


Consumer rates

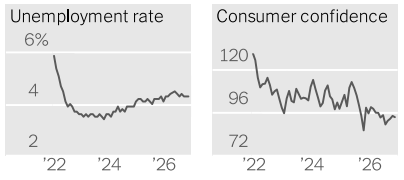


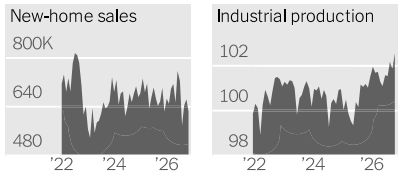
Commodities





Economy





Europe Raises Interest Rates as Conflict Stokes Inflation

By ESHE NELSON

LONDON — The European Central Bank raised interest rates on Thursday, becoming the first major central bank to act to rein in rising inflation set off by the war in the Middle East.

European policymakers, who set rates for the 21 countries that use the euro, are moving more quickly than officials in other major economies, such as the United States and Britain, because the war has jolted inflation in the region from a relatively comfortable position. The E.C.B. lifted its key rate by a quarter point, to 2.25 percent. It was the central bank's first increase since September 2023, having cut rates eight times in 2024 and 2025.

Before the war, inflation in the eurozone was close to the bank's 2 percent target. By May, it had jumped to 3.2 percent. Now, officials warn it will be "well above" target into the first half of next year as higher energy prices also feed through into higher prices for food, other goods and services.

"We are beginning to see a broadening of inflation throughout the economy," Christine Lagarde, the president of the central bank, said in a news conference on Thursday in Frankfurt.

Since the outset of the war in the Middle East, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz — a critical waterway for energy, fertilizers and other commodities off Iran's southern coast — has pushed up inflation around the world. But those rising costs are weighing on economic growth, leaving central bankers to balance the risks of higher inflation against those of a slowdown.

Central banks in a few other countries, including South Africa, Australia and Norway, have raised rates since the war began in late February. The Bank of Japan is expected to raise rates next week for the first time since December.

In the United States, prices are rising at their fastest pace in three years, diminishing the prospects of a resumption of the rate-cutting cycle the Federal Reserve was in last year. Fed officials will meet next week, and though they are not expected to change rates then, there are growing bets among investors that rates will rise later in the year. Similarly, the Bank of England is expected to hold interest rates next week after the war in the Middle East interrupted a slow but steady series of rate cuts.

SAMUEL ARANDA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A bakery in Barcelona. The European Central Bank, as it raised rates for the first time since 2023, said it expected inflation to run hotter than predicted.

For the past year, the E.C.B. has held rates at 2 percent, a level intended to neither bolster nor restrict the economy. While Europe has been grappling with how to improve competitiveness and generate sustained growth, policymakers expected that keeping rates low would, in the short term, support the economy through more consumer spending and businesses investment.

Instead, the conflict in the Middle East quickly upended those expectations. Soaring energy prices added uncertainty and unpredictability. Economists, weighing a range of increasingly adverse scenarios, have started to predict sharply higher inflation, slower economic growth and even recession.

On Thursday, the E.C.B. published new economic forecasts, showing that inflation was likely to rise even more than its staff expected near the outset of the war. In their main scenario, price growth would average 3 percent this year, 2.3 percent next year and 2 percent in 2028. Staff also lowered their economic growth forecasts, projecting the region's economy to grow just 0.8 percent this year because of "a more pronounced impact of the war on commodity markets, real incomes and confidence."

Still, the eurozone economy has not shown signs of a repeat of 2022, when Russia invaded Ukraine. Europe responded by cutting itself off from Russian gas, a critical energy supply, and inflation climbed into the double digits. So far, traders aren't betting that this is the beginning of a long and aggressive cycle of rate increases, though financial markets suggest there could be two more quarter-point rate increases by next spring.

Many economists argue that the E.C.B. is unlikely to raise rates that much because it has to weigh higher inflation against signs of any economic slowdown caused by the war. Consumer confidence has plummeted and could weigh further on spending, while businesses and governments are diverting money to pay the higher costs of energy.

To some extent, slower growth could mitigate inflationary pressures. If consumers grow more nervous about spending, companies may find it harder to raise prices. At the same time, workers may not be able to push for higher wages if the labor market weakens. That could stop inflation from rising as quickly or for as long.

Christine Lagarde, president of the central bank, said, "We are beginning to see a broadening of inflation."

In fact, the prospect of a deeper slowdown has made some economists concerned that rate increases could be a mistake. They have raised comparisons to 2011, when the E.C.B., led by Jean-Claude Trichet, raised rates twice in the first half of the year only to have Mario Draghi, Mr. Trichet's successor, cut rates a few months later.

Frederik Ducrozet, head of strategy and macro research at Pictet Wealth Management, said he did not believe it was necessary for the E.C.B. to raise interest rates because he didn't see any signs of so-called second round effects, in which higher energy costs lead to higher wages.

E.C.B. officials said that the decision to raise rates was "robust" in light of the range of scenarios they considered about how the war might affect the European economy in the next few years. One scenario was based on a swift resolution to the conflict and energy prices returning to their pre-war levels this year.

Though, at this point in time, that more optimistic outcome was unlikely to materialize, Ms. Lagarde said.

Mideast War Is Weakening Global Growth, Bank Warns

By ALAN RAPPEPORT

WASHINGTON — The war in the Middle East is slowing global economic growth this year to its weakest pace since the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a World Bank report published on Thursday that revealed the fallout of soaring energy prices.

The U.S.-Israeli attack on Iran in late February has led to a prolonged disruption of cargo traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, causing oil, gas and fertilizer prices to gyrate for months. The disruption to global supply chains has fanned a new round of inflation, raising expectations for higher interest rates and slower output around the world.

The World Bank lowered its growth outlook from earlier this year, projecting output to slow to 2.5 percent in 2026 from the 2.9 percent it grew in 2025. It estimated output could fall to 1.3 percent if the conflict escalated and supply disruptions were protracted.

The conflict appeared to be escalating on Thursday, when President Trump threatened additional attacks on Iran and a takeover of its energy infrastructure.

"We will be taking Kharg Island, and other oil infrastructure points, and assume total control of their Oil and Gas Markets, much like we have with Venezuela," Mr. Trump wrote on social media.

He later posted that he had "cancelled the scheduled strikes and bombings against Iran" because of progress on a peace deal.

After more than four years of persistent inflation, the war is pushing prices higher again. The World Bank projects that global inflation will rise to 4 percent in 2026 from 3.3 percent last year. The increase is being driven by a 22 percent rise in commodity prices, which in January had been expected to decline.

Rising prices in the eurozone pushed the European Central Bank to raise interest rates Thursday, making it the first global central bank to increase borrowing costs in the wake of the war. The inflation rate in the eurozone was 3.2 percent in May, driven by higher energy prices from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

The Middle East is bearing the brunt of the global slowdown, as the war impedes oil exports. Europe also faces substantial headwinds because of reliance on natural gas imports. High food prices and fertilizer shortages are slowing growth in sub-Saharan Africa.

The U.S. economy has been relatively resilient because of tax cuts, artificial intelligence investments and domestic oil production. Despite those buffers, the United States is also contending with rising consumer prices.

On Wednesday, the Consumer Price Index showed that the annual rate of inflation rose to 4.2 percent in May. That was up from 2.4 percent before the war started.

The World Bank said policymakers needed to balance their goals of containing inflation and supporting economic growth. It warned that weaker investment could lead to slower hiring.

"The conflict has taken a toll on global activity, but every crisis also brings an opportunity," said Ayhan Kose, deputy chief economist at the World Bank Group. "This moment should be used to strengthen policy frameworks, invest in infrastructure, accelerate business-enabling reforms and mobilize private capital to support job creation at scale."

Britain Investigates Ryanair's Fees for Parents

By JONATHAN WOLFE

There are plenty of headaches that come with traveling with children, and if you fly Ryanair, you have to pay to reserve a seat next to yours. But now the low-cost airline is facing scrutiny over that policy.

On Thursday, a competition regulator in Britain said that it was investigating Ryanair, Europe's biggest airline, over fees that it says the airline charges parents to sit with their children on flights.

The Competition and Markets Authority, a consumer protection department, said Thursday that it was looking into whether Ryanair's child seating practices were unfair and, therefore, against the law.

Ryanair defended its seating policy in a statement Thursday morning and called the investigation "bogus," saying it was a failed effort by the government of Prime Minister Keir Starmer "to pretend it cares about consumers."

The regulator said that Ryanair's terms and conditions required children under 12 to sit next to at least one parent. The parent, however, must pay to reserve a seat, typically around 8 British pounds, or $11, per flight, the department said. Children under 2 can sit on a parent's lap.

The regulator said that it was investigating whether Ryanair's seat reservation system meant that parents were being charged so the carrier could meet airline rules around disabilities and child safety. It said Ryanair was the only major airline operating in Britain that imposed this type of fee.

The investigation will examine whether Ryanair's contract terms are "unfair." That involves applying a legal fairness test to the contract to determine whether it is tilted too much in favor of the business, the department said. Unfair terms are not legally binding for customers.

Ryanair, in its response, said that all adults who wanted to reserve a seat, including those traveling with children, needed to pay a fee. The airline added that once parents pay their seat fee, they can reserve up to four seats for their children for free. It said children's tickets did not include an extra fee to sit next to their parents.

"Ryanair's family seating policy fully complies with all relevant laws and regulations," the company said.

Last year, the airline lost an appeal in Italy against a ban on airline fees for adults to sit next to children under 12 or people with disabilities.

As part of its investigation, the British regulator said it was also looking into whether Ryanair's mandatory family seat fee was "dripped" during the booking process. "Dripping" is the practice of adding fees separately, or later in the booking process, rather than up front. Under British consumer law, businesses must show a total price that includes all unavoidable charges.

ALEXANDROS AVRAMIDIS/REUTERS

Travelers at the Makedonia airport in Thessaloniki, Greece, last month. Ryanair, Europe's biggest airline, charges parents to sit with their children.

Last year, new consumer protection provisions went into effect in Britain, strengthening the consumer regulator. The department is now able to decide whether consumer protection laws have been broken, rather than relying on courts. It can directly address incidents with fines and other measures.

The regulator said it expected to deliver an update on its investigation in six months.

Private Medicare Plans Often Deny Access to Skilled Nursing Homes, Federal Analysis Shows

By REED ABELSON

People enrolled in private Medicare Advantage plans have been inappropriately denied admission to a skilled nursing home when leaving the hospital, according to a new analysis by federal investigators.

These private plans, which cover about 35 million older Americans under the federal Medicare program, have drawn sharp criticism for delaying and denying medically necessary care. Federal investigators have previously raised similar concerns about the plans' tactics.

Insurance companies offering Medicare Advantage plans often require prior authorization before agreeing to cover treatment. The companies say they are reducing the number of procedures requiring prior approval as part of a broad commitment made last year.

Plans are paid a fixed amount to care for patients, so they have a financial incentive to spend less on care. To achieve savings, these plans often deny people expensive specialized inpatient care, like tailored rehabilitation or therapy services, and may instead send them to outpatient facilities or back to their homes, according to the analysis.

Two new reports from the inspector general's office at the Department of Health and Human Services focused on major insurers — UnitedHealth Group, Humana and CVS Health, the large for-profit companies whose plans cover the bulk of people enrolled in Medicare Advantage.

The companies denied about 13 percent of patients' requests to go to a skilled nursing facility to continue their recovery from surgery or a serious illness, according to the first report. The investigators also raised concerns about whether outside contractors being used by the insurers to decide whether a patient should get more specialized care were being adequately supervised.

"The dominance of a few large insurance companies in Medicare Advantage and the use of contractors to process prior authorization requests means that the policies and performance of just a few companies can impact care for millions of people," Rosemary Bartholomew, who led the government team, said in an interview.

Overall, about one in five patients appealed the insurers' denials, and nearly all were reversed, according to the investigators' review of denials by 19 companies in June 2024. UnitedHealth, which received the highest number of requests for appeal, reversed 99.7 percent of its rejections, according to the inspector general's inquiry.

The high percentage of denials that were overturned suggests some people's care was inappropriately delayed because of the insurers' decision, and others may not have gotten the care they deserved because they never appealed.

"The reports ignore serious, well-documented concerns about wide variations in the cost and quality" of the nursing homes, Chris Bond, a spokesman for AHIP, a trade association for the insurers, said in a statement. "More than 35 million Americans actively choose M.A. because it provides them with better, more affordable care — including helping seniors transition to high-quality, clinically appropriate care settings to support their rehab and recovery."

In a statement, Mary Beth Donahue, the president of the Better Medicare Alliance, which represents the private plans, pointed out that the investigators' data was from 2024.

"Since then, health plans have voluntarily eliminated roughly 6.5 million prior authorizations across markets — including more than 15 percent in Medicare Advantage," she said.

Appeals are often successful, but few patients even try.

Investigators also detailed the physical and mental toll of the delays and denials for many patients who waited a week or more to get into a facility. Some were stuck in the hospital, adding unnecessary costs for the hospital and angst for patients.

A lack of information or some other hiccup might have triggered initial denials, but the high reversal rate suggested a more systemic problem. "Obviously, that's not the ideal outcome," Ms. Bartholomew said. "You want those requests to be approved at the first request as often as possible."

The report also highlighted the role of a company owned by UnitedHealth, the former naviHealth, to review patients' requests.

The company is often hired by other plans, and investigators found it had higher denial rates than plans that made the decisions themselves or used other contractors. It also had high rates of denials for patients seeking inpatient rehabilitation services, according to a second report from the investigators.

NaviHealth has been accused of using algorithms to deny claims, and UnitedHealth is the subject of a class-action lawsuit. It has previously denied these allegations.

Nursing home patients, whose daily care is often paid for by federal-state Medicaid programs, sometimes qualify for short-term services under Medicare. These patients were denied skilled nursing care 40 percent of the time, according to federal investigators.

The investigators urged the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which oversees private plans, to collect more information about denial rates and the use of outside companies to do the reviews. They also urged the agency to focus on how the initial reviews were conducted to see why so many of the denials were overturned.

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SPACEX I.P.O.

THE BUY-IN

Investors Feed A.I. Firms' Need For New Money

By Joe Rennison, Lauren Hirsch and Maureen Farrell

Many of the world's largest technology companies have spent the past two decades generating ample cash to keep growing without the need for outside investment.

But in the race to dominate the artificial intelligence industry, companies are opening themselves up to new money, borrowing cash and raising equity from investors after years of relying on their own profitability.

On Thursday, Elon Musk's SpaceX, a rocket maker and leader in A.I., is seeking to raise $75 billion in an initial public offering that value the company at $1 77 trillion, making it the largest I.P.O. on record.

Last week, with much less fanfare, Google's parent company, Alphabet, issued $80 billion in new shares to fund its own A.I. expansion. It was the largest-ever stock raise from a company already listed on public markets.

The rapid pace of fund-raising has led to comparisons to the dot-com bubble. And like the early internet companies of the 1990s, today's A.I. companies are finding deep, seemingly insatiable investor demand.

"It feels very much like the late 1990s," said Steven Kaplan, a professor of finance at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. "The markets are very risk-on, and there's a new technology that investors are incredibly excited about."

This is unusual. For much of their history, the marquee tech companies have generated large amounts of cash, limiting the need to raise money elsewhere. Alphabet had roughly $125 billion of cash sitting on its balance sheet at the end of March. Microsoft had $80 billion.

But the scale of the A.I build-out is now thought to be so colossal that even these cash-rich companies don't have enough to finance it by themselves. At the start of May, Goldman Sachs estimated that the total spent on A.I. infrastructure this year would be $765 billion, with the total through 2031 rising to over $7 trillion.

Even if the companies involved could afford that on their own, the sheer willingness of investors to back A.I. projects means that the cost to these companies — through the amount of interest on debt or from the amount raised for each new share issued — of bringing in outside investors has remained attractive.

Alphabet had initially planned to raise $80 billion by issuing new shares this month but increased the total to closer to $85 billion because of strong investor demand, according to two people familiar with the deal.

The company also received a big endorsement from Berkshire Hathaway. As part of the deal, Berkshire Hathaway is investing $10 billion in Alphabet, a notable bet by a firm that has been relatively conservative about technology stocks. It's one of the most significant deals that Berkshire Hathaway's chief executive, Greg Abel has done since taking the reins this year.

Last month, investor demand to buy into Cerebras's I.P.O. allowed the semiconductor company to increase its initial share price from a low of $115 to a final listing of $185. Shares of the company are now more than 30 percent higher, even after falling nearly 20 percent from their peak in May. Quantinuum, another computing company, also increased its I.P.O. price in June, though shares have fallen 10 percent since the company went public.

Overall, new stock issuance among technology companies is running at a record pace in the United States, according to data from Refinitiv, a financial data firm. For the year through June 9, technology deals accounted for more than 40 percent of the equity raised from I.P.O.s, follow-up stock offerings and convertibles, a type of debt that converts to equity.

SpaceX alone is expected to surpass the total raised from all of the other 426 initial public offerings globally so far in 2026, according to Refinitiv. The A.I. companies Anthropic and OpenAI are also expected to list on public exchanges this year.

Debt markets have also seen a boom in issuance tied to the A.I. demand.

The Magnificent 7 companies — Alphabet, Apple, Amazon, Tesla, Nvidia, Meta and Microsoft — have already issued more debt this year than in any other since the turn of the millennium.

Tech companies more broadly have borrowed more than $150 billion this year, more than double their dollar-denominated debt issuance over the same period last year, according to Refinitiv.

Some bankers, analysts and investors say the foundation underpinning the A.I. build-out is different from the circumstances of the dot-com boom, which finally burst in the early 2000s. Today, established companies that are still generating large profits are mostly the ones taking on debt and driving the capital expenditure, not money-losing start-ups.

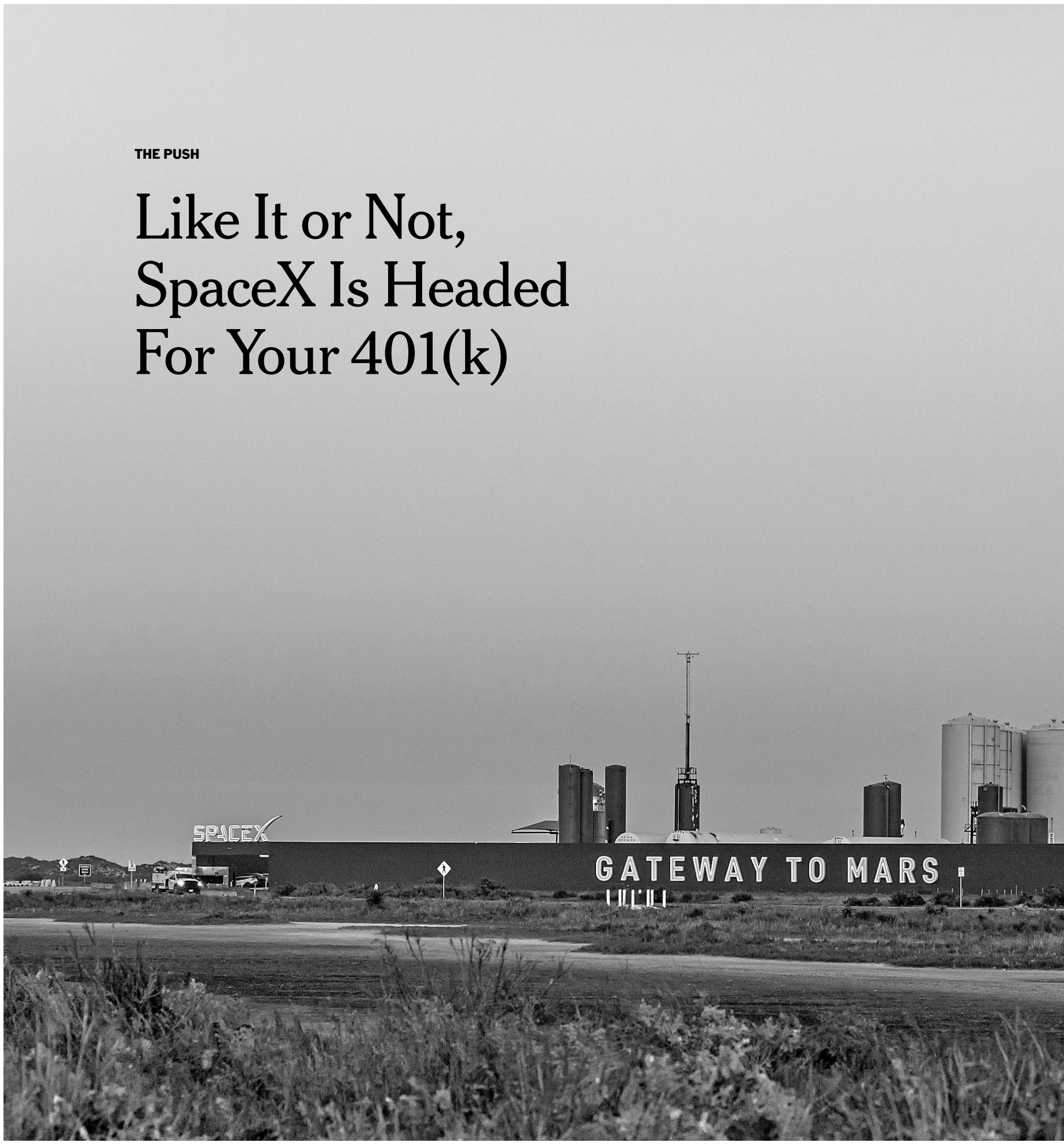
But even those bullish on the future of A.I. acknowledge that the high valuations that investors have given these companies still represent a bet on an unrealized future.

"It's still a question whether these companies will make money and their investments in data centers and infrastructure will actually pay off," Mr. Kaplan, the finance professor, said.

"What you don't know is whether it's 1998 or 2000."

THE PUSH

Like It or Not, SpaceX Is Headed For Your 401(k)



SpaceX is said to have pushed stock indexes to include its shares soon after the I.P.O. — a break from tradition because new shares carry risks. Many retirement accounts hold index funds.

By MIKE ISAAC and MAUREEN FARRELL

Earlier this year, the leaders of the world's largest stock indexes found themselves in a pickle.

SpaceX, Elon Musk's rocket maker, had told them that it planned an initial public offering in the summer. The company said it wanted to be included in the top indexes — which are composed of a variety of public companies and act as a barometer of the broader stock market — shortly after going public, two people familiar with the process said.

It was a big ask. Most indexes, like the Nasdaq-100, do not add companies until at least a year after they go public to protect index funds — the widely used investment vehicles that track the indexes — from trading volatility. If SpaceX was included faster than normal, it would compel large index funds run by giants like Fidelity and Vanguard to buy millions of SpaceX shares practically overnight. While that could increase SpaceX's share price, it could expose index fund investors to more risk.

But missing out on what could be the biggest I.P.O. in history, in a year when other sizable offerings are also expected, was too much for Wall Street to bear, the two people said. Nasdaq, the exchange where SpaceX plans to list its stock, announced a rule change in May to allow "fast entry" into the Nasdaq-100 index by large private companies like SpaceX that go public.

Others followed. FTSE Russell recently altered its methodology, which will result in listing SpaceX in its indexes within a week of its going public.

The changes mean a large array of index funds — which millions of Americans own in their retirement funds, pension plans and personal portfolios — are poised to hold SpaceX shares soon after the company goes public. Anthropic and OpenAI, the artificial intelligence startups that are planning to go public this year, would also land in index funds quickly, potentially exposing everyday investors to more financial risk whether they like it or not.

"It's historically unprecedented," said John Polonis, a former Wall Street lawyer who worked at J.P. Morgan and now offers financial analysis on social media. "You can try to reorient your retirement accounts to avoid funds invested in A.I. companies, but most people aren't going to be doing that. They're kind of left out in the dust here."

The changes by the indexes are just one way that Mr. Musk, 54, has upended I.P.O. norms. The tech mogul has bet that investors cannot resist a deal as enticing as SpaceX, the juggernaut behind the Starlink satellite internet service, private rocket launches and, most recently, artificial general intelligence research. The sheer size of his company — it is set to be valued at $1.77 trillion upon its I.P.O., larger than Meta — has given Mr. Musk the power to demand onerous terms from those who seek a windfall from its stock market debut.

Among them: Mr. Musk has required Wall Street banks, law firms, auditors and other advisers working on the I.P.O. to buy subscriptions to Grok, his A.I. chatbot, which is part of SpaceX. And on Wednesday, he did not set a price range for the offering, as most companies going public would, providing just one share price — $135 — for buyers to take or leave.

Neither SpaceX nor Mr. Musk responded to requests for comment.

Nasdaq executives have denied that they altered their rule for SpaceX. Nasdaq's president, Nelson Griggs, said in a Bloomberg interview last month that the exchange had begun discussing index rule changes more than a year ago. Since SpaceX, Anthropic and OpenAI were so big, he said, it was important that index fund investors not have to wait for access to them.

Emily Spurling, who leads Nasdaq's global indexes, said in a statement, "Our responsibility is straightforward: to ensure the Nasdaq-100 continues to meet its stated objective of representing 100 of the largest Nasdaq-listed nonfinancial companies."

One index provider has declined to budge. Last week, Standard & Poor's said it would not change its criteria for inclusion in the S&P 500, one of the most-followed indexes, meaning SpaceX will not be eligible for inclusion until at least mid-2027. Standard & Poor's said it had determined that exceptions to its rules "should not be granted solely based on market capitalization."

In the past, newly public companies could not immediately join most indexes because their stocks could be volatile and the companies generally had a limited history of reporting their finances.

With few exceptions, companies needed to be publicly traded for a year, known as a seasoning period, before being considered for inclusion in an index. They also had to have made enough shares available to the public, called a float, to justify their inclusion. In the case of the S&P 500, a company also had to show profits in its most recent fiscal quarter and the prior full financial year.

Those restrictions have come under pressure as the characteristics of companies going public have changed. Over the past decade and more, many tech startups tapped investments from venture capital and private equity funds so they could stay private for longer. When they filed for an I.P.O., they were typically larger and more mature.

Given that, index officials theorized that these companies were likely to have outsize trading importance in the overall

YOUR MONEY

The Joy of Missing Out on an Enormous Launch

By RON LIEBER

Elon Musk may be about to become a trillionaire.

Many of the people who work for him at SpaceX are about to hit seven-figure jackpots — or more — via the company's initial public offering.

And individual investors are lining up for a chance to buy shares for the $135 opening price. There are so many of them that some brokerage firms are, in effect, running a lottery for $135 tickets.

Do you have fear of missing out? That's natural, maybe inevitable. But this is a fine time to remind yourself that you can in fact win if you don't play this week. JOMO, the joy of missing out, is a reasonable alternative to FOMO.

SoFi, one of the brokerage firms whose customers can try to participate in the I.P.O., offers varying perspectives on the question of whether to do so. In 2024, it described its efforts to give some investors indirect access to SpaceX via so-called private-market funds as exciting and empowering. In 2025, it ran an article with the headline "How to Avoid FOMO Trading."

Some people who choose to dive in could execute a perfect flip by buying at $135 and immediately selling for a much higher price (if they aren't subject to so-called lockup periods and don't mind any penalty that a brokerage might threaten in order to keep too many people from selling so quickly). They'll need to bet a lot to win a lot.

Buy-and-hold investors may not be so lucky, depending on how long they hang on. As my colleague Jeff Sommer wrote recently, the price-to-sales ratio for SpaceX (a measure of a stock's price in relation to its annual sales) is incredibly high. Morningstar values the stock at $63. If its analysts are correct or even close, there will be no reason to lament missing out on buying SpaceX at $135.

Not all bandwagons make sense hopping on immediately.

$135
Starting share price for SpaceX.

As for the SpaceX employees and early-stage investors, think twice before you envy them. After all, they're betting on Mr. Musk, who has been erratic, distracted and frequently destructive while also making lots of money for Tesla shareholders who got in at the right time.

His employees may also love the work they do, and much of it — satellite internet and space exploration — is useful, cool and off-the-charts innovative. But the ones who are about to get wealthier have probably been slogging away for a while.

"There is a lot of slow, boring work that leads to something this exciting," said Milo Benningfield, a veteran financial planner in San Francisco who has had a front-row seat for a variety of

SPACEX I.P.O.

MERIDITH KOHUT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MERIDITH KOHUT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Just like any SpaceX rocket launch, all eyes will be on the company when its I.P.O. takes off.

THE QUESTIONS

Want a Piece of the Action? Tips About the Offering.

By ARUNI SONI

SpaceX, Elon Musk's rocket ship company, plans to sell shares publicly for the first time ever this week. It's an unusual event in several ways.

The company's initial public offering would earn it the title of the world's largest I.P.O. SpaceX is also giving everyday investors a much larger slice of its shares than is typical for a public offering. And the I.P.O. could create the world's first trillionaire by increasing the net worth of the company's chief executive, Mr. Musk.

Here's what you need to know ahead of SpaceX's first day of trading on Friday.

What is an I.P.O.?

An initial public offering, or I.P.O., is a company's debut in the stock market. It's the first time the general public can buy a piece of the company. Firms do this to tap into a bigger pool of capital to help them expand their business.

When a company decides to go public, it works with an investment bank to figure out how much the company is worth and the price at which it should sell its shares.

SpaceX has set its price at $135 a share, which would value the company at $1.77 trillion. Since last week, SpaceX's bankers have been discussing with prospective investors how many shares they are willing to buy at that price. On Thursday night, all orders for shares will become final, and the offering process will close.

On Friday, the shares will start trading publicly on Nasdaq. After trading starts, the stock price is likely to fluctuate as the shares change hands on the open market. Bankers generally try to price an I.P.O. so that it has room to rise once its shares are public. Some analysts question how much more the value of SpaceX may rise, given its already lofty valuation.

Why does the SpaceX I.P.O. matter?

Hundreds of companies introduce their stock on the market every year. But what makes SpaceX stand out is its size.

At a $1.77 trillion valuation, it would dethrone Saudi Aramco — Saudi Arabia's state-owned oil company, which debuted in 2019 with a valuation of $1.7 trillion — as the largest I.P.O. ever.

"It's a big deal because it's literally a big deal," said Matt Kennedy, senior strategist at Renaissance Capital.

If SpaceX's I.P.O. flops, it could send a shudder through a market that has been riding a wave of optimism related to artificial intelligence and other technology. The outcomes could include a chilled I.P.O. market or a broader market selloff.

"If SpaceX does poorly and the rest of the market goes down with it, we'll all be pointing to that as the sign that the market peaked," Mr. Kennedy said.

Still, it's possible investors will stick with the company for reasons beyond the "Elon Musk factor" or A.I.-related exposure, he added.

Who makes money from the I.P.O.?

The immediate beneficiaries of the I.P.O. are those who already own private shares of SpaceX. They include Mr. Musk, who owns a majority of the company's shares and could see his net worth rise to over $1 trillion.

Others include SpaceX employees who have been compensated in company stock, and investors, including venture capital funds. The banks helping SpaceX go public will make money, too, earning a fee of more than $500 million, the largest payout ever.

The banks are also using the I.P.O as an opportunity to woo clients in their wealth management businesses, giving them access to SpaceX's initial offering shares.

If shares of the company pop, investors who buy on Thursday evening can sell those shares and make a profit.

Over the long term, SpaceX's stock performance may depend on whether Mr. Musk can deliver on his promises to install tens of thousands of new satellites in orbit and develop a viable A.I. model.

How can I buy SpaceX stock?

It's possible for everyday investors to buy shares of the company at its $135 price, though not guaranteed.

When firms go public, they usually reserve a small sliver of their stock for individuals, with the bulk going to giant investors like asset managers and hedge funds.

SpaceX, however, is seeking commitments from individuals for up to 30 percent of its shares, much larger than a typical offering.

Some of those shares set aside for individual investors will be available under the SPCX ticker on online brokerage platforms like Robinhood, Fidelity, Charles Schwab and SoFi.

For anyone looking to buy SpaceX shares, the brokerages have said investors may not get the total number that they request, given a limited supply of stock at the initial offering price.

"Here, you ask for 1,000 shares — maybe you'll get 300; maybe you'll get 50," said Jay Ritter, an I.P.O. expert at the University of Florida.

Individuals may find themselves owning SpaceX shares even if they didn't actively choose to invest.

The Nasdaq-100, a popular index that tracks the top 100 nonfinancial companies listed on that exchange, recently relaxed its rules to make it easier and faster for SpaceX to be included. That will force funds that track the index to invest in SpaceX practically overnight.

How much could investors make?

Nearly 16 years ago, investors piled onto the I.P.O. of Mr. Musk's electric vehicle company, Tesla, which proved lucrative for those who held on. Someone who bought $1,000 of Tesla shares in 2010 would have seen their value soar to around $400,000 today.

SpaceX is the biggest company in the space industry by a wide margin, which makes it a defining stock to own for those interested in that sector. It has also been around for over two decades and has hosted several funding rounds since then.

"The time for being an early investor in SpaceX has sort of passed," Mr. Kennedy of Renaissance Capital said.

market. Those who manage which companies join an index said they had become concerned that investors could miss out if major companies were not included sooner.

"In defense of these indices, if an index wants a broader view of the market, including these companies sooner is one way to get there," Mr. Polonis said.

SpaceX fits many of those characteristics. Founded in 2002 by Mr. Musk, the company has raised billions of dollars from venture capital firms like Founders Fund. It has become a major global business, landing numerous government contracts and providing satellite internet service in markets from Brazil to Australia.

Many index officials said they had conducted market consultations and received feedback emphasizing the importance of "faster index representation" for large I.P.O.s

"FTSE Russell indexes exist to represent the market," Karen Lee, a spokeswoman for the index, said in a statement. "A fast-entry I.P.O. process directly supports that mission."

SpaceX also pushed to find ways to increase demand for its shares after its I.P.O., telling the indexes that it wanted to be included in them soon, the people familiar with the process said.

The rule changes by indexes may warp passive investing — a set-it-and-forget-it way for amateur investors to accumulate wealth — into something riskier, some analysts said. Index funds are a popular form of passive investing, since the funds simply track the market.

2027

Earliest the S&P 500, a holdout, would list SpaceX.

'They're kind of left out in the dust here.'

John Polonis, former J.P. Morgan lawyer, on people's difficulty reorienting retirement accounts

"The whole point of passive investing is that you can close your eyes and expect the market will do the work for you," said Ed Elson, host of the "Prof G Markets" podcast. "If you trust Elon Musk, be my guest and invest directly in the I.P.O. But you cannot just stuff these genuinely terrible companies into people's 401(k)s and retirement accounts."

As SpaceX's I.P.O. loomed, some retail investors said they felt trapped into owning the stock even though they did not want to.

Ian Yarbrough, 46, who works on utilities at Indiana University in Bloomington, has a retirement fund and has also put money into index funds. He has long been wary of Mr. Musk's businesses and has avoided what he sees as hype around A.I. So when he heard SpaceX might quickly be included in index funds he holds, he tried to make changes.

But after finding his brokerage firm made it difficult to avoid funds invested in A.I. companies like SpaceX, he gave up.

"It doesn't feel like anybody is watching out for retail investors or the common person anymore," he said. "It feels like the system is rigged against us."

ROBERT NEUBECKER

technology market cycles. Any moment like this one, he added, is an opportunity to ask yourself some fundamental questions about your day job. "What would you enjoy doing along the way and appreciating for its own sake?"

In the mid-aughts, Katy Song saw the stock-market boom, and the beginning of the bust, up close as a software and semiconductor banker in San Francisco. She pivoted to financial planning with an office just north of the city, and her clients are a mix of employees at companies that will or could go public soon and young families just trying to pay for preschool or afford a house.

The latter group gets a basic budget and a specific question.

"I show them their goals and put price tags on those goals," Ms. Song said. "In none of these cases is someone going to sell 100 percent of their rollover I.R.A. and buy SpaceX."

Now, her query: "When you said you wanted security and safety, do you think investing directly in SpaceX is going to feel that way?" They can usually answer that one for themselves.

Not everyone has safety and security as a goal, younger people in particular. And gambling can be fun, if you have money you can afford to lose and don't get addicted. If you're in that category, chances are you won't have the opportunity to buy many I.P.O. shares anyway, and direct exposure to SpaceX won't mess with your ability to meet your long-term financial goals.

Other people had their own goals before SpaceX scheduled its offering, and nothing about this week's spectacle is likely to change those. That said, any envy right now is a fine prompt to revisit your medium- and long-term aims.

Then, ask yourself one more question: What have you won already? You probably have a decent-size list.

A few things come to mind for me.

I've spent 32 years saving as much as I reasonably could and taking whatever the market would give me in index funds or similar investments, and it has worked so far.

Members of my immediate family have run the cancer gantlet six times without dying of the disease.

I've gotten to write this column for 18 years without boredom or termination.

Congratulations to the SpaceX welders and mariners and coders. Hats off and good luck to the individual investors who will play the lottery on Friday.

But I'm rooting especially hard for the JOMO crowd. I'll be turning off the television on Friday and eating some ice cream.

SPACEX I.P.O.

THE MUSK MYSTIQUE

An Uncertain Offering From an Upstart Tesla Paved a Lucrative Path

By JACK EWING

Tesla had sold barely 1,000 cars when the company's chief executive, an up-and-coming entrepreneur named Elon Musk, rang the opening bell at Nasdaq in June 2010.

The initial public offering valued Tesla at $1.7 billion even though the company's only product was its two-seat Roadster, which had a starting price of $100,000 and took seven hours to charge. Some prominent Wall Street figures were deeply skeptical.

"Tesla is a sell, sell, sell," Jim Cramer, the CNBC host, told viewers. "You don't want to own this stock."

Tesla and Mr. Musk have come a long way.

Now he is asking investors to value SpaceX, where he is also chief executive, at $1.77 trillion, or more than a thousand times what Tesla was worth in 2010. The SpaceX listing is expected to raise $75 billion for the company. Tesla's listing raised $226 million, far less than it had received in federal government loans.

Mr. Musk is much better known than he was in 2010. As the world's richest person, he has become a lightning rod for anti-billionaire sentiment. He owns the social media site X, which he uses to broadcast right-wing political views.

But the Tesla stock listing and its share price's stunning rise in recent years helped create an aura of mystique around Mr. Musk. To his many admirers on Wall Street and in Silicon Valley, he is a genius who has made loyal investors insanely wealthy while disrupting the auto indu try and paceflight

An investor who bought 1,000 Tesla shares in 2010 at the initial offering price of $17 and held the shares until now would have made a profit of more than $5.8 million. That spectacular return has enabled SpaceX's "massive valuation," said Michael Lenox, interim dean of the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia.

$5.8M

Value today of 1,000 shares from Tesla's I.P.O. in 2010.

"'In Elon we trust,'" Mr. Lenox said, summarizing the view of Mr. Musk among his admirers. "He has created these successful businesses. That is what the market is looking at."

Even in 2010, Mr. Musk displayed brashness and a talent for winning over investors.

Parrying criticism from Mr. Cramer, Mr. Musk reminded viewers that the Wall Street guru had also recommended buying shares in Bear Stearns before the Wall Street bank collapsed during the financial crisis. Mr. Cramer, Mr. Musk said with a smirk during an interview with CNBC, was a "contraindicator."

"The smartest money in the world is betting on Tesla," he told Bloomberg in another interview, without naming any investors. "They must have some reason."

Mr. Cramer was not completely wrong. Tesla shares languished for almost a decade, trading below the offering price well into 2019. They started taking off after the company's Model 3 began to sell in significant numbers.

Mr. Cramer later changed his mind about the fledgling carmaker, which became the largest manufacturer of electric vehicles until BYD of China overtook it last year.

"Tesla was a highly speculative company when it came public, and I was skeptical," he said this week in a statement to The New York Times. "As the company proved it could execute and the facts changed, my view changed."

In 2010, it was by no means certain that Tesla's stock would be successful. Inside the company, employees were anxious, said Kurt Kelty, who was Tesla's senior director of battery technology. "What's going to happen with the price of the stock once it goes public?" he said they had wondered. "Are we going to tank on the first day? Are we going to take off like a rocket?"

Mateo Jaramillo, who worked on Tesla's electronic propulsion systems at the time, said he and other workers had been too busy to spend much time celebrating. "Maybe we took an hour or two to acknowledge the event, and then it was right back to work," he said.

Tesla employees had stock options, but at the time, those didn't seem much more valuable than the bottles of "Roadster Red" wine they had received as a memento of the stock market listing.

"We all believed in the company, or we wouldn't have been there," said Mr. Jaramillo, now chief executive of Form Energy, a company that makes large energy-storage systems. "But none of us went there with the expectation that it was going to be a wealth-creating sort of endeavor."

It was an inauspicious time for the auto industry. General Motors was emerging from bankruptcy, and Ford Motor was selling Volvo at a loss after selling Jaguar Land Rover.

There was effectively no market for electric vehicles. The Model S sedan, Tesla's first mass-production car, would not hit the road for another two years.

"There were still a lot of questions about electric cars and whether they were viable," said Mr. Lenox, whose research at the University of Virginia focuses on technology firms.

Mr. Musk won over investors by portraying Tesla as a Silicon Valley start-up with huge growth potential, the opposite of the plodding, century-old Detroit carmakers.

"We operate in a fundamentally different manner and structure than traditional automobile manufacturers," Tesla's 2010 prospectus said.

Mr. Musk is still telling shareholders that Tesla is much more than a car company. Now he argues that it will dominate the market for self-driving taxis and humanoid robots, untested technologies that are not generating much revenue. Enough investors buy that premise to give Tesla a stock market valuation of $1.4 trillion, many times the valuations of G.M. and Ford.

He has also been pitching SpaceX as more than just a rocket company or a provider of satellite internet service. It will also build orbiting data centers to power xAI, its artificial intelligence unit, and lead humanity to Mars, he has said.

SpaceX's mission is "to build the systems and technologies necessary to make life multiplanetary, to understand the true nature of the universe and to extend the light of consciousness to the stars," the company has said in investor presentations.

Nobody can say with any certainty how SpaceX stock will perform and whether it will follow the trajectory of Tesla shares. Even executives who spent years at the automaker acknowledged that they had failed to anticipate its rise.

"Who would have known how high the stock has gone," Mr. Kelty, now vice president in charge of batteries at G.M., said about Tesla's shares. He added, "I wish I'd hung on to mine."

During Tesla's initial public offering in 2010, Elon Musk, the company's chief, said, "The smartest money in the world is betting on Tesla."

THE DOUBTS

Is SpaceX Worth $1.77 Trillion? It's a Pie in the Sky, Some Skeptical Investors Say.

By RYAN MAC and MIKE ISAAC

In a pitch to private investors, Elon Musk once predicted that one of his companies would quintuple its revenue to more than $26 billion and nearly quintuple its customer base by 2028.

That company was Twitter and those projections were made as Mr. Musk prepared to buy the social media company for $44 billion in 2022.

Today, Twitter, which has been renamed X, has fallen far short of what Mr. Musk said would happen. The social media platform's ad revenue plunged 65 percent last year. And it was ultimately folded into SpaceX, Mr. Musk's rocket company, this year.

Now as SpaceX readies for a blockbuster initial public offering, Mr. Musk and his investment bankers are selling even loftier propositions about what the rocket and artificial intelligence company will achieve. But those proclamations, coupled with Mr. Musk's history of overpromising, have some investors increasingly worried that SpaceX — which could go public at a $1.77 trillion valuation — may burn them.

"It really does feel very much a 'don't look at the man behind the curtain' situation," said Jim Chanos, the founder of the investment firm Chanos and Company, who predicted the 2001 collapse of Enron, the energy company that was found to have engaged in accounting fraud.

Mr. Chanos and others said they were concerned with SpaceX's finances. The company lost $4.3 billion in the first three months of the year alone and is spending heavily on A.I. development. Revenue was $4.7 billion and growing, but it was far lower than that of tech giants like Meta, which brought in $56.3 billion in the same period and has a stock market valuation of $1.4 trillion.

At the same time, SpaceX has promised that its total addressable market — which is its revenue opportunity if it captured all the demand across its various industries — is the largest "in human history" at $28.5 trillion. The figure dwarfs China's annual gross domestic product by more than $8 trillion.

Michael Burry, a hedge fund investor featured in the book "The Big Short" for his predictions on the 2008 financial crisis, said in a Substack discussion last month that any increase in SpaceX's stock after its I.P.O. would "be on hype and technicals."

One sober analysis put the value lower by $1 trillion.

$4.3B

How much SpaceX lost in the first three months of the year.

"Nothing in that S-1 suggests it is worth $1 trillion let alone $2 trillion," Mr. Burry wrote, referring to the company's I.P.O. filing.

Even some SpaceX shareholders have doubts. Ross Gerber, the chief executive of Gerber Kawasaki, an investment firm that owns SpaceX stock, said the company's projections reminded him of unverified information that young start-ups used to woo investors. He said he was alarmed by SpaceX's likely valuation of $1.77 trillion, which would be more than four times the $400 billion that the company was valued at just 13 months ago.

"Investors are paying an extremely high price for this stock," Mr. Gerber said.

A SpaceX spokesman did not return a request for comment.

SpaceX's bankers, including Goldman Sachs, which is leading the I.P.O. process, have added to the sweeping projections. The Financial Times earlier reported that Goldman had told a potential investor that it expected SpaceX's total revenue to reach $474 billion in 2030, up from $18.7 billion last year. Morgan Stanley, which is also working on the I.P.O., said in an analysis shared with investors that it anticipated SpaceX's revenue would hit $3.4 trillion by 2040, according to The Wall Street Journal.

A spokesman for Goldman declined to comment. Morgan Stanley declined to comment.

Morningstar, an investment research company, issued a more sober analysis. The firm said that SpaceX's I.P.O. price was "overvalued" and that the company was worth around $780 billion. Nicolas Owens, a Morningstar equity researcher, gave SpaceX a 7 percent chance of getting its latest rocket, Starship, to a point where it can be used over and over again like a regular plane, and proving that A.I. data centers were cheaper and more effective than their terrestrial counterparts. In the most optimistic scenario, Mr. Owens said, SpaceX could be valued at $1.97 trillion.

"We'll know in two to three years if Starship is reusable or a GPU rack in space will be viable or offer some cost

SPACEX I.P.O.

BRENDAN MCDERMID/REUTERS

THE EARLY INVESTOR

He Got In Early and Resisted His Doubts. Now, the Payday.

By ROB COPELAND

SAN FRANCISCO — On Friday, when SpaceX shares begin trading in the largest ever public offering on record, a host of Elon Musk's friends, associates and hangers on are poised to become fabulously rich.

Also on the list for a life-changing financial windfall is Justin Fishner-Wolfson, long a minor figure in Mr. Musk's orbit, but one whose livelihood hews on being one of the rocket maker's most steadfast investors.

Working out of unmarked San Francisco offices above a tailor shop, Mr. Fishner-Wolfson has spent the past 15 years amassing as much ownership of SpaceX's privately held shares as possible.

He has raised money from all corners of the world to buy stakes directly in the company, including by offering to buy shares from SpaceX employees. Since his investment firm, 137 Ventures, made its first investment in 2011, it has not sold any SpaceX shares, no matter the temptation to lock in profits earlier.

Little by little, Mr. Fishner-Wolfson's firm now owns more than 1 percent of SpaceX, worth roughly $20 billion at the company's expected $1.77 trillion valuation at its listing price. He has been privately buying SpaceX's shares since the company was valued at $1 billion.

"This will most likely define my career," he said in an interview this week.

Some SpaceX investors, who have been financing in the rocket maker for at least as long as Mr. Fishner-Wolfson, have already entered the realm of Silicon Valley legends. They include an early Tesla booster to whom Mr. Musk gifted the company's second roadster; a space enthusiast who wore pajamas to SpaceX board meetings; and the U.S. ambassador to Denmark, who lent Mr. Musk use of his Texas mansion. (News of Mr. Musk's extended stay at the mansion came out at a time when he was publicly boasting about his modest lifestyle.)

Mr. Fishner-Wolfson has kept a lower profile. A Texas native, Mr. Fishner-Wolfson skipped the second grade, allowing him to matriculate at Stanford at 16 years old. He is quick to point out he was rejected from Harvard, and to draw a contrast between himself and Silicon Valley stereotypes ("I've done basically no drugs," he volunteered).

His initiation in SpaceX traces back to 2008, when the company seemed somewhere between a dream and a joke. Then 26 years old and the most junior of five investment employees at Peter Thiel's venture capital firm, Founders Fund, he was assigned to check in on their new investment into SpaceX.

So unknown was SpaceX at the time that Founders Fund used to keep hand-drawn sketches of future rocket prototypes on the office white boards.

That August, Mr. Fishner-Wolfson flew to Los Angeles and stood in the control room at the company's headquarters next to Gwynne Shotwell, SpaceX's president, to watch a live video feed from the Marshall Islands of the company's third attempt to launch a reusable rocket. The ship made it all of two minutes in flight before crashing in flames.

"What are you going to do?" he recalled asking Ms. Shotwell. His partners had just poured $20 million into SpaceX, or about 10 percent of their most recent fund. He needed an explanation of what went wrong at the launch.

She was nonplused, he recalled. Maybe it was a software timing issue, she suggested. They would have to build another rocket and try again.

"That's it?" Mr. Fishner-Wolfson responded. He returned to San Francisco knowing not much more than he had when he left. But his bosses at Founders Fund were unfazed and stuck with SpaceX.

The fund's $20 million investment is now worth billions, according to three investors in the fund.

"Nobody could have expected this 20 years ago," Mr. Fishner-Wolfson said.

SpaceX did not respond to requests for comment.

Three years after witnessing the doomed rocket launch, Mr. Fishner-Wolfson struck out on his own and started 137 Ventures, named after the seat his grandfather held at the New York Stock Exchange.

He invested in other start-ups, such as Uber, but SpaceX was by far his central interest. The 137 offices contain a shrine of sorts to the company. In the entryway, in lieu of a receptionist, sits an enormous used engine from a SpaceX rocket. A crane was needed to knock out a window to get the rocket into the building.

There have been moments of doubt. About 10 years ago, when SpaceX began raising money for what seemed like an outlandish side project, the satellite internet service Starlink, the venture capital firm, which has 25 employees, debated whether to keep investing. "There was a lot more risk on the table," said Alex Jacobson, a partner at 137 Ventures.

Justin Fishner-Wolfson's firm owns more than 1 percent of SpaceX, worth roughly $20 billion at the expected $1.77 trillion valuation (at a $135 listing price).

Mr. Fishner-Wolfson, 44, is eager to talk about the business of SpaceX, but he is shy to discuss Mr. Musk, who even after the public offering will maintain a vast majority of the controlling shares. Asked whether he had ever delivered tough feedback to Mr. Musk, he paused for 19 seconds before answering in the affirmative, without providing details.

"You can say whatever you want to say, and then he'll either change his mind or he won't," he said, adding: "It's usually a short conversation."

Mr. Fishner-Wolfson said he had learned to ignore the newsmaking moments about Mr. Musk's personal and political life. "Whoever Elon happens to be dating at any given moment is not that relevant to the business of SpaceX," he said.

Mr. Fishner-Wolfson's next decision — perhaps his biggest yet — is what to do with his SpaceX stake after it goes public.

He has been preparing for that for years, having moved to Las Vegas in 2018 in part to establish residency in a low-tax state, according to a friend who discussed it with him (he says he moved to be closer to his parents, too).

But after spending more time than practically anyone else with SpaceX's top executives — and even hosting some at his wedding — not even Mr. Fishner-Wolfson can predict whether the company's lofty valuation will hold once its shares go public. SpaceX has been losing billions of dollars, and some of its core businesses like artificial intelligence lag rivals.

He has settled on a sort of practiced Zen.

"On Friday, it could quadruple or go down 50 percent," Mr. Fishner-Wolfson said.

The question of whether to sell remains out of his hands for the time being. Like other pre-I.P.O. investors, Mr. Fishner-Wolfson and his firm are barred by SpaceX from even beginning to sell shares until just after the first earnings report, expected in August, and will not be permitted to unload all of the shares until six months from the I.P.O.

He said he would, at the earliest opportunity, distribute to the firm's investors most of their SpaceX shares, which would allow each to decide whether to sell or hold on longer.

He said he was in no personal hurry to sell — he expected SpaceX could be worth 10 times its offering price before long. "It's still a company I believe in," Mr. Fishner-Wolfson said.

FRIENDSHIP

A Longtime Loyal Lieutenant Is About to Reap the Benefits

By THEODORE SCHLEIFER

For 25 years, Antonio Gracias has dedicated himself to serving as one of Elon Musk's most loyal lieutenants, doing anything and everything to aid the tech mogul across his business and political empire.

On Friday, it's payday.

When SpaceX, Mr. Musk's rocket company, most likely starts trading on the stock market, Mr. Gracias and his private equity firm, Valor Equity Partners, are set to reap one of the largest-ever returns from a private investment. Valor is the second-biggest disclosed shareholder in SpaceX after Mr. Musk, and the blockbuster initial public offering will almost certainly make both Mr. Gracias and his Chicago-based firm billions of dollars.

Mr. Gracias and Valor control a $65 billion stake in SpaceX at its target I.P.O. valuation of $1.77 trillion, according to calculations by The New York Times. If SpaceX soars when it starts trading, Mr. Gracias, 55, will instantly become one of the world's wealthiest people — though he would still be less rich than Mr. Musk, who could become a trillionaire.

Mr. Gracias's potential windfall from SpaceX shows how extreme wealth can be created by betting on one friend over and over — in this case tying himself to Mr. Musk, a once-in-a-lifetime wealth-generation machine, and holding on for dear life.

"Antonio's ownership stems from absolute support, even when it looked like SpaceX would fail, and many investments over 2 decades," Mr. Musk posted on Saturday on X, his social media platform. "One could not ask for a better friend."

Mr. Gracias is so financially intertwined with SpaceX that the company's I.P.O. filing required a 390-word footnote to identify the 30 separate Valor- and Gracias-affiliated entities that control 503 million of the rocket maker's shares, totaling about 3.7 percent of the company. Five of those entities appear to be space-focused funds, or what Mr. Gracias has called "single asset vehicles."

To achieve that stake, Valor invested $400 million to $500 million in SpaceX as of 2021, according to estimates that Mr. Gracias gave in two depositions related to Mr. Musk's pay package at Tesla, his electric automaker.

Most of the returns from SpaceX's I.P.O. will accrue to Valor's investors, called "limited partners," Mr. Gracias said last month, though he said he had a "large" personal stake in the funds. Mr. Gracias said in the depositions that for the main funds that have invested in SpaceX, his firm takes 20 percent of the profits that it makes for those investors, and he then personally takes about 50 percent of those profits made by the firm. Precisely how much he will be worth could not be determined.

When asked in one of the depositions if he had personally generated "dynastic or generational wealth" because of Mr. Musk, Mr. Gracias agreed. "We have amassed a great deal of wealth, yes," he said in 2022.

Valor has a close financial relationship with SpaceX in other ways. The rocket company owes Valor about $20 billion after xAI, a SpaceX subsidiary, struck three deals with the investment firm to lease infrastructure for artificial intelligence, according to its I.P.O. filing.

"Valor and Antonio have stuck with this so doggedly and with such determination," said James Star, an investor in SpaceX and Valor. The investment generated "a lot of controversy over a long period of time," including with Valor's investors.

A representative for Mr. Gracias, who also serves on SpaceX's board, said he had no comment, citing the so-called quiet period before an I.P.O.

Mr. Gracias is a son of immigrants, with one parent born in Spain and the other in India. Raised in East Grand Rapids, Mich., he attended Georgetown University and then the University of Chicago law school. There, he befriended a classmate, David Sacks, who became a Silicon Valley entrepreneur and investor.

In 1995, while in law school, Mr. Gracias began a predecessor firm to Valor with $400,000. It primarily invested in manufacturing but eventually bet on a company where Mr. Sacks worked, Confinity. Confinity and a start-up that Mr. Musk had created later merged to form PayPal. Through PayPal and Mr. Sacks, Mr. Gracias met Mr. Musk.

The two men became friends. After Mr. Musk's eldest son died around 2002, Mr. Gracias consoled Mr. Musk, according to the depositions.

In 2005, Mr. Gracias invested in Tesla, joining the company's board two years later at Mr. Musk's request. Mr. Musk, meanwhile, invested in Mr. Gracias's two first funds at Valor.

Mr. Gracias also helped Mr. Musk develop the idea for SpaceX, and their ties tightened further when Valor invested $25 million in the company in 2008. Mr. Gracias joined SpaceX's board two years later.

Mr. Musk said Mr. Gracias had given him $1 million as a "short-term loan when I ran out of money" in 2008, which helped SpaceX and Tesla when they had little cash. Recounting those companies' near-death years in a 2012 speech at the Economic Club of Chicago, Mr. Musk motioned to Mr. Gracias.

"I don't think we would've made it without his help, so thank you," a tuxedoed Mr. Musk said.

Mr. Gracias prides himself on getting his hands dirty. During a difficult period at Tesla in 2018, he said in one of the depositions, he "slept in the conference room next to" Mr. Musk at the car company's factory.

Sam Teller, a longtime chief of staff to Mr. Musk who later worked for Valor, said Mr. Gracias "showed up during the most challenging times, not just with capital, but as an invaluable operational partner alongside us on the ground."

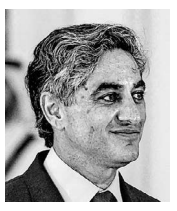
By 2021, Mr. Gracias had personally made $900 million to $1 billion thanks to his investment in Tesla, before taxes, he said in a deposition. (Tesla's stock has since doubled.)

Mr. Gracias was technically an independent director at Tesla until 2021, though what it means to be independent in Mr. Musk's companies has been challenged by critics. The two men have vacationed together in Africa, the Bahamas and Jackson Hole in Wyoming, and spent holidays at each other's homes, according to the depositions. Mr. Gracias is also close to Mr. Musk's younger brother, Kimbal, accompanying him to the emergency room after he broke his neck skiing and serving as a groomsman in his 2018 wedding.

"We are usually talking about business when we are socializing anyway," Mr. Gracias said in one of the depositions.

When Mr. Musk bought Twitter, now X, in a contentious $44 billion deal in 2022, it was little surprise that Mr. Gracias pledged his support.

"I am 100% with you Elon," Mr. Gracias wrote in texts during the acquisition, which were later made public as part of litigation. He cited "The Godfather" and vowed to go to the "mattresses no matter what" to defend the principle of free speech "with our lives or we are lost to the darkness." Using expletives, he added: "Sorry for the swearing. I am getting excited."



Antonio Gracias stood by Elon Musk during difficult times at Tesla. Mr. Gracias and his private equity firm, Valor Equity Partners, control a $65 billion stake in SpaceX.

'One could not ask for a better friend.'

Elon Musk posted on X about Antonio Gracias last week.

Mr. Gracias was intimately involved in organizing Mr. Musk's financing for Twitter. After the purchase closed in October 2022, he helped Mr. Musk with layoffs and reorganization at the social media company.

Like Mr. Musk, Mr. Gracias was a Democrat for most of his career. He attended a 2016 presidential debate as a supporter of Hillary Clinton, and posted extensively online about his support for Gov. JB Pritzker of Illinois. (Mr. Gracias lived in Chicago until 2021, when he moved to Miami amid a divorce.)

But like Mr. Musk, Mr. Gracias took a turn in recent years.

When Donald J. Trump won the presidential election in 2024, Mr. Gracias joined Mr. Musk at Mar-a-Lago to sketch out a plan for cutting the federal bureaucracy. He was motivated by concerns that the United States was flirting with becoming a "kleptocracy" and a "Latin American-style autocracy," he said on a podcast. Mr. Gracias and two Valor employees then worked with Mr. Musk in Washington to crack down on what they said was fraud at the Social Security Administration.

In March 2025, Mr. Gracias shed his usual penchant for anonymity at a high-profile political engagement in Wisconsin with Mr. Musk, who was rallying for a conservative judicial candidate.

"I'd like to welcome my friend Antonio Gracias to the stage," Mr. Musk told the crowd of 2,000 in Green Bay. Out walked Mr. Gracias, who spent over an hour onstage talking through a presentation, which was at times misleading, that he said exposed rampant fraud in Social Security rolls due to undocumented immigrants. He supported federal employees and legal immigration, he added.

"This is not political," he said to cheers. "This is about America and the future of America."

Mr. Gracias seems to be channeling his wealth primarily into the world of psychedelics. In 2023, his charitable foundation gave $16 million to start a program at Harvard focused on research into the drugs. His foundation is also trying to execute a complicated takeover of Lykos Therapeutics, a psychedelic biotechnology company.

Mr. Gracias has promised to stay active in A.I. as well, disputing that the technology will cause widespread job losses and declaring at a conference in March that he was "going to work really hard in the next five or 10 years to make it not true."

But his main interest remains Mr. Musk. Last month, Mr. Gracias joined the boards of two more Musk companies, Neuralink and the Boring Company, according to SpaceX's I.P.O. filing.

savings," he said, referring to the computer chips used to power A.I. technology. "But the company is asking everyone to decide on Friday if that's possible and what it's worth."

Mr. Musk has also shown a propensity to change his business goals on the fly, analysts and investors said. It was not until last year that he first spoke of data centers in space, and he doubled down on the idea in February after merging SpaceX with his A.I. company, xAI.

In April, SpaceX said it had agreed to acquire Cursor, an A.I. start-up that develops coding software, for $60 billion, shifting the company into an area it was not previously focused on. Mr. Musk, who has spent billions to build his own frontier A.I. models and his A.I. chatbot Grok, also appeared to change course recently on other A.I. plans.

Last month, SpaceX struck a deal with the A.I. start-up Anthropic to provide it with computing power for products that were not being used by Mr. Musk's own A.I. services. SpaceX then forged a similar agreement last week to provide Google with computing power.

SpaceX boosters on Wall Street and social media promoted the deals as wins that would generate tens of billions of dollars in revenue. But naysayers pointed to how the company was making significant changes to its long-term business plans at the last minute.

'It really does feel very much a "don't look at the man behind the curtain" situation.'

Jim Chanos, the founder of the investment firm Chanos and Company, who predicted the 2001 collapse of Enron.

"The real excitement should be about developing some new, powerful agentic model," Mr. Chanos said. "But xAI seems to be suddenly changing its business model from developing models like Grok to basically becoming a neocloud," he said, using the industry term for companies that provide computing power to other A.I. firms.

"That's crucial because the entire valuation rests on xAI's progress," Mr. Chanos said, calling the neocloud strategy a "commodity business" that is valued far lower on the public markets.

Ultimately, SpaceX's I.P.O. will be a litmus test of investors' faith in Mr. Musk, Mr. Gerber said. Those willing to pay will do so because Mr. Musk, who previously transformed the car industry with his electric carmaker Tesla, is at the helm of a one-of-a-kind company in SpaceX.

"People are paying a trillion dollars for Elon," Mr. Gerber said.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Trump Once Again Muses About Americans Sharing in A.I. Wealth

By Tripp Mickle, Ana Swanson and Cecilia Kang

HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Sam Altman, the chief executive of OpenAI, on Capitol Hill last week. Mr. Altman first publicly floated the idea of giving people stock in a 2021 blog post.

SAN FRANCISCO — For the second time in a week, President Trump said Americans could get rich by sharing in the wealth from artificial intelligence companies.

In the Oval Office on Wednesday, Mr. Trump said he would soon host a meeting with the top "12 or 15 executives" in the A.I. industry to discuss the idea of companies' "giving back something to the public." He added, "If we do that, the public will become very rich."

The comments built on Mr. Trump's remarks on Friday when he was first asked about the U.S. government's acquiring stakes in A.I. companies. He said then that he wanted to meet with the companies to discuss providing the United States with stakes in their business, which "could be given to the American public."

Though it's unclear how such an arrangement would work and when such a meeting would take place, Mr. Trump has turned up the temperature on a hot topic in Washington and Silicon Valley as the tech industry reckons with a growing backlash against A.I.

This month, Bernie Sanders, the progressive senator from Vermont, proposed that the federal government levy a one-time 50 percent tax on A.I. companies that would be paid in stock. His rationale was that the technology was built on Americans' collective intelligence — songs, computer code, scientific research, videos and more — so everyone should share in the wealth it creates.

Silicon Valley appears to be on the verge of a new generation of wealth creation thanks to A.I. But this boom could come with a big downside: Many in the industry worry it will destroy the jobs of white-collar workers, ranging from highly paid software programmers to back-office accountants.

The risks of mass layoffs have led A.I. executives to float a series of unusual ideas that would relieve pressure on the companies responsible for those job losses. One of those ideas was to give Americans equity in their businesses, so that everyday people could share their wealth.

The idea is taking on new urgency as public opposition to A.I. swells. Anxieties about job cuts, soaring energy prices and social disruptions have led people across the political spectrum to rally against the technology. In a March Quinnipiac University poll of American adults, 55 percent said they viewed A.I. as a force for harm rather than good. And some lawmakers increasingly worry that tech companies in general are growing too powerful.

This year, OpenAI and Anthropic, the leading A.I. start-ups, which are each worth nearly $1 trillion and could have initial public offerings this year, have proposed creating public funds that would redistribute some of their wealth in the case of mass layoffs. One way to do that would be through a sovereign wealth fund, or government-run investment fund, that holds stakes in their businesses and distributes dividends.

"The notion that the government should be a partner in new technology is not new, but the idea that the government and American citizens should have equity is a radical departure from the free-markets approach of the world," said David Yoffie, a professor at Harvard Business School.

In a 14-page paper that Anthropic released on Wednesday, it said it wasn't "yet ready to advocate specific policies for this scenario" but suggested that lawmakers evaluate a few options, including a so-called universal basic income.

(The New York Times sued OpenAI and Microsoft in 2023, claiming copyright infringement of news content related to A.I. systems. The two companies have denied those claims.)

Risk of mass layoffs has led to a series of unusual ideas.

Sam Altman, the chief executive of OpenAI, first publicly floated the idea of giving people stock in a 2021 blog post. Mr. Altman described a future when A.I. would render jobs largely meaningless. Rather than tax labor, as the government does today, he proposed a new system where A.I. companies are taxed on their market value and forced to pay the government in stock, so that "all citizens over 18 would get an annual distribution, in dollars and company shares."

During a visit to Washington in January 2025, Mr. Altman floated the idea directly with Mr. Trump, suggesting that OpenAI would donate shares in its business to seed a government investment fund for A.I., three people familiar with those confidential conversations said. In the months that followed, other OpenAI executives raised it with administration officials, who dismissed it as a bid by the company to raise money.

Last week, Mr. Altman returned to Washington to push a new plan. OpenAI had released a 13-page policy paper comparing A.I. to the Industrial Revolution and calling on lawmakers to "respond to technological upheaval with ambition." It proposed a "Public Wealth fund that provides every citizen — including those not invested in financial markets — with a stake in businesses.

In less than a year, the Trump administration has snapped up ownership shares in more than 20 companies, an unusual practice that is reshaping the relationship between the government and the private sector.

The government's growing portfolio involves companies in steel, minerals, nuclear energy, semiconductors and other fields, including prominent firms like Intel, U.S. Steel and Westinghouse. Some of the deals are preliminary, and not all have been made final.

More than half a dozen of the companies are involved in mining or the production of rare-earth magnets, a sector the United States has been trying to quickly build up after China introduced export curbs last year. Another nine of the companies are involved in quantum computing, an emerging technology that the United States would like to dominate.

It's not clear what exact approach the administration would take with A.I. companies, but the proposals appear to involve the government's being given the stakes rather than paying for them.

One possibility would be for the shares to go to new investment accounts known as the Trump accounts, which were created through last year's tax bill. Brad Gerstner, the founder of Altimeter Capital Management, which invested in Anthropic and OpenAI and has worked with the administration on investment accounts, said on social media that the shares should be held by citizens through their Trump accounts or in a pooled trust that would be divided among people in the future.

"I don't trust shares in the hands of some future politicians that can coerce or liquidate & spend on whatever their political beliefs," he wrote on social media.

Aaron Bartnick, a White House technology official in the Biden administration, said he was not aware of any existing legal mechanism that would allow the government to accept such a gift. The stock, he added, is "incredibly valuable."

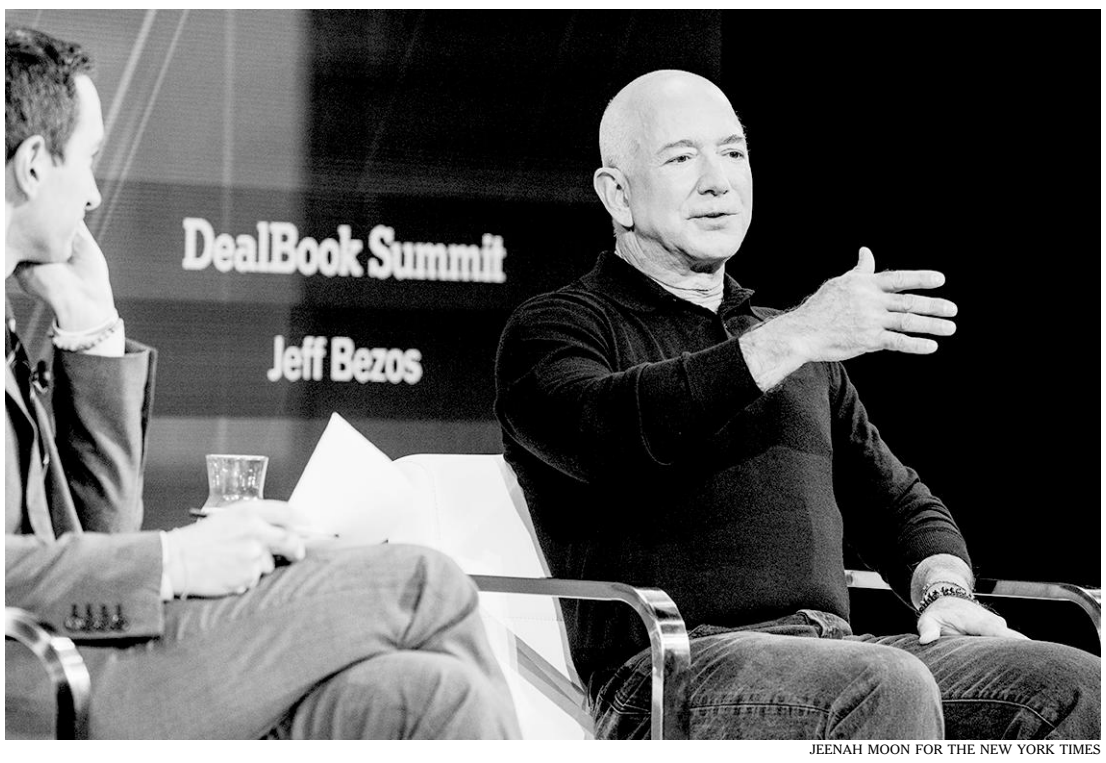
"These companies are not typically in the business of giving it away for free," he said. "So it begs the question: What do they feel they are getting in return?"

Behind Mr. Trump's idea appears to be one animating idea: The president likes owning equity in businesses.

Tripp Mickle reported from San Francisco, and Ana Swanson and Cecilia Kang from Washington.

Bezos Wants to Build an 'Artificial General Engineer'

By CADE METZ



JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

With his new company, Jeff Bezos is training A.I. on the design and manufacturing process of various industries.

SAN FRANCISCO — Silicon Valley is intent on building "artificial general intelligence," a machine that can do anything the human brain can do.

But Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon, has a more specific ambition. With his new start-up, Prometheus, he wants to build what he calls an "artificial general engineer."

Backed by more than $12 billion in funding, the company intends to create new engineering tools using many of the techniques used to build chatbots and other A.I. technologies. The hope is that these automated systems will improve the design and manufacture of practically any device, from computers to jet engines.

"All societal wealth is driven by invention," he said in an interview with The New York Times. "Six thousand years ago, somebody invented the plow, and we all got wealthier. Then, much later, somebody invented the steam engine, and we all got wealthier."

"What Prometheus seeks to do," he added, "is to offer a set of tools that dramatically accelerates that invention loop."

The new start-up, which is valued at $29 billion and has about 150 employees, is among several well-funded efforts to apply A.I. to physical tasks, including robotics, drug design and other scientific discovery. Much as online chatbots learned to write by analyzing enormous amounts of digital text, other A.I. systems can learn skills by pinpointing patterns in data collected from activities in the physical world.

In 2024, Mr. Bezos invested in Physical Intelligence, a start-up founded by prominent researchers that is applying A.I. to robots. Last year, several researchers left Meta, OpenAI, Google DeepMind and other notable A.I. projects to create Periodic Labs, which hopes to accelerate discoveries in physics, chemistry and other areas.

With Prometheus, Mr. Bezos and his co-chief executive, Vik Bajaj, aim to do something even more ambitious. They want to improve the efficiency of companies that design and build computers, automobiles, spacecraft and other physical products.

Mr. Bezos and Dr. Bajaj are in talks to raise an additional $100 billion for an investment fund that Prometheus would control, three people familiar with the talks said. The fund could invest in or even buy companies that can benefit from the technology under development at Prometheus.

The new A.I. start-up could support other companies backed by Mr. Bezos, including his rocket company, Blue Origin. David Limp, the former Amazon executive who leads Blue Origin, is a member of the Prometheus board of directors.

"Blue Origin is a perfect example of a company that could benefit from the tools that Prometheus is building," Mr. Bezos said. "Any company that is building sophisticated devices — like rocket engines — would benefit greatly from this kind of technology."

Today, companies often need a decade to design and manufacture a new jet engine, Dr. Bajaj said. His hope is that Prometheus can significantly reduce that time.

A start-up called Prometheus aims to improve design.

"To design something that complicated takes a thousand human minds creatively working together," Dr. Bajaj said. "It is one of the most complex things we do as a species."

He added: "But they use tools that really haven't changed for decades. Part of what we want to do is arm them with tools that allow them to come up with those designs much more quickly."

Mr. Bezos said he was spending a significant amount of time working on the company, which is based in San Francisco.

Dr. Bajaj is a trained scientist with significant experience in industry. After studying as a physicist and a chemist, he worked closely with the Google cofounder Sergey Brin at Google's X, a research effort inside the tech giant often called "the Moonshot Factory."

In 2015, Dr. Bajaj helped found Verily, a research lab that focuses on the life sciences. Like Waymo and Wing, Verily is operated by Alphabet.

He later co-founded and served as chief executive of Foresite Labs, an effort to create A.I. and data science start-ups. He left that job to focus on Prometheus.

Mr. Bezos and Dr. Bajaj declined to reveal many details about how the company aims to build its new A.I. tools.

"You can't build something like a jet engine with words alone — not even the words of mathematical equations," Dr. Bajaj said. "It is about multidimensional forces and fields and how they are changing over time."

Mr. Bezos put it more simply: "There are many years of grinding ahead of us to fulfill the vision we have."

THE NEW YORK TIMES CLASSIFIED LISTINGS

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Nadella Is Open to Sharing Wealth of A.I. Companies

By EMMY MARTIN

SAN FRANCISCO — Satya Nadella, the chief executive of Microsoft, said on Wednesday that the backlash against artificial intelligence was evident across the United States, but that the technology would boost wages and that "everyone is a stakeholder" in A.I.

"You can't deny that the perception is terrible," Mr. Nadella, 58, said during a live interview in San Francisco with "Hard Fork," The New York Times's tech podcast. He acknowledged there might be job displacement because of A.I., but pointed to the technology's power and benefits.

Mr. Nadella added that he was not opposed to people sharing in the wealth from A.I. companies. That idea was recently floated by Bernie Sanders, the progressive senator from Vermont, who has called A.I. a "public resource" that Americans should have some ownership in. On Wednesday, President Trump also raised the notion for the second time in a week, saying Americans could get rich by sharing in the wealth from A.I. firms.

Mr. Nadella made his comments as A.I. has become an increasingly political issue. A national movement of parent groups, religious leaders, environmentalists and former Tea Party activists have decried the technology and the construction of A.I. data centers across the nation. Many have criticized the technology for how it could displace jobs, endanger national security and affect people's mental health.

Mr. Nadella has been steering Microsoft, one of the largest public companies in the world, through a fierce A.I. race. The tech giant, along with Google, Amazon and Meta, has spent billions to build data centers to gain enough computing power to develop the technology.

In 2019, Mr. Nadella oversaw Microsoft's early investment in OpenAI, a bet that proved prescient when the A.I. lab's ChatGPT chatbot took the world by storm in late 2022. Microsoft eventually invested another $12 billion in OpenAI. The partnership gave Microsoft an early lead in A.I.

But as competition intensified, Mr. Nadella recently renegotiated Microsoft's relationship with OpenAI to make the companies less codependent. Microsoft remains a major shareholder in the start-up and its biggest financial backer

Mr. Nadella has talked about needing to carefully allocate Microsoft's resources — computing, especially — for serving customers, powering OpenAI and developing Microsoft's own A.I. products and systems.

(The New York Times has sued OpenAI and Microsoft, claiming copyright infringement of news content related to A.I. systems. The two companies have denied the suit's claims.)

At Wednesday's event, Mr. Nadella said Microsoft's partnership with OpenAI remained important to his company, pointing to how the start-up continues to provide it with intellectual property.

Acknowledging that a technology's image is 'terrible,' but pointing to benefits.

Mr. Nadella also addressed a memo that the new leaders of Xbox, Microsoft's video game division, sent to staff on Wednesday about a reset over the next 100 days. The challenge for Xbox was making money from its entertainment content, he said, and it also had to deal with the rising prices of materials for the video game console it makes.

"The scarcity of the semiconductor supply and memory, in particular, are having a massive impact on consumer electronics," Mr. Nadella said.

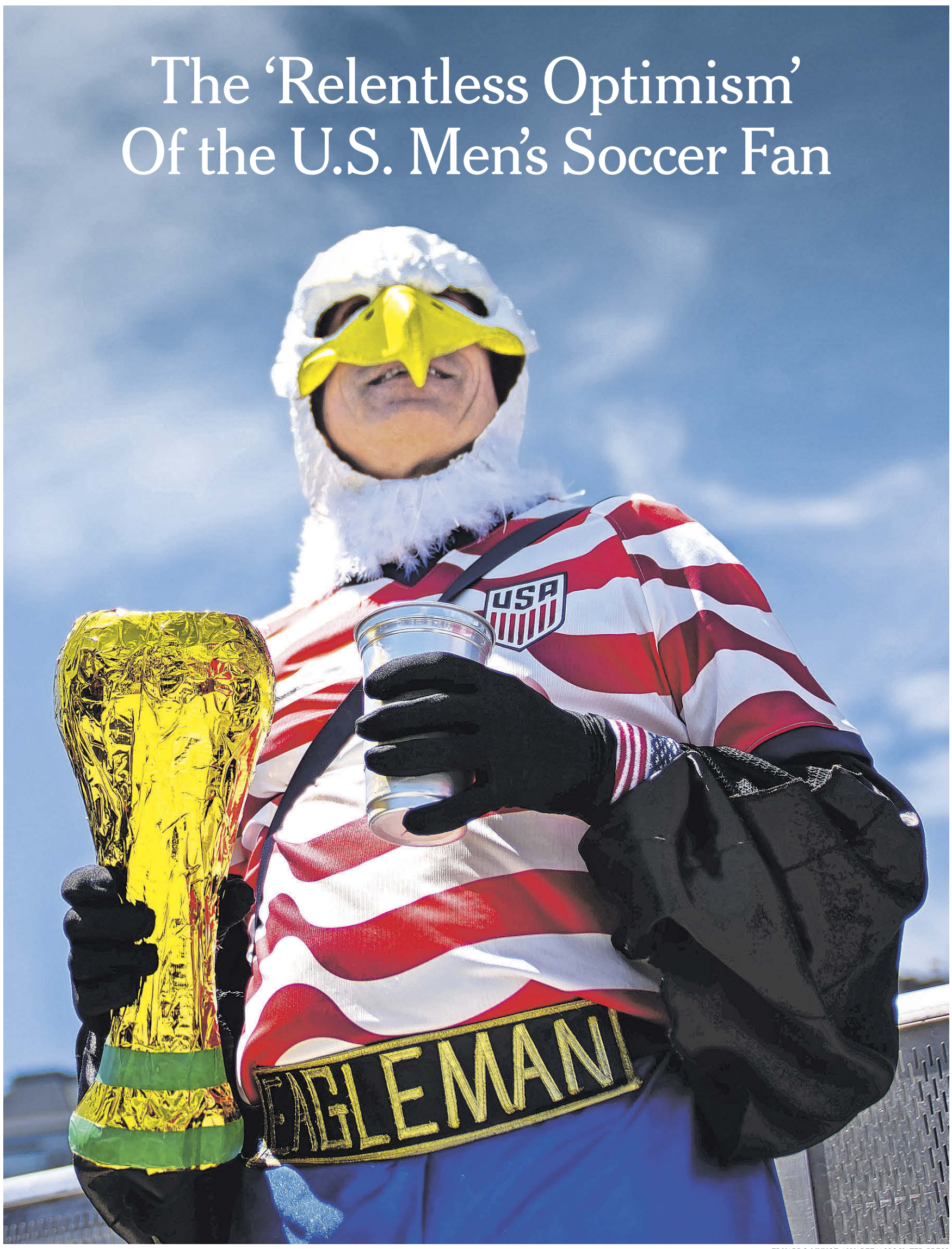
He added, "We have to turn this into a sustainable business that delivers what is fundamentally one of the best sources of entertainment."

Karen Weise contributed reporting from Seattle.

Sports
The New York Times

World Cup

The 'Relentless Optimism' Of the U.S. Men's Soccer Fan



EDUARDO MUNOZ ALVAREZ/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Attending the announcement of the United States men's national soccer team roster last month was a fan in an American bald eagle costume.

For a variety of reasons, America has not been fertile soil to grow a national fandom.

By HENRY BUSHNELL
The Athletic

Diverse. Complicated. United.

That, in three words, is U.S. soccer fandom. It's the faithful few who travel coast to coast. It's the millions attached to this infectious but fragmented sport, their interest divided among dozens of leagues and teams.

It's also the soccer agnostics, the rabid sports fans who obsess over basketball or American football but ignore soccer for years at a time.

Every fourth year, all those groups rally around the U.S. men's national team, united by a belief that their overlooked squad, and this overlooked sport, can rise and shock the world.

"It's a relentless optimism," said Antonio Borjon of Southern California, a fan of the U.S. team.

Throughout the 2026 World Cup, that optimism will stretch across all 50 states.

And it will overwhelm any cynicism, apathy or frustration that typically trails the U.S.M.N.T., the popular moniker for the U.S. team.

The team's fan base, like the vast country the team represents, is varied and difficult to define. It is also relatively nascent. American soccer, just a few decades ago, existed in society's shadows.

"I loved soccer as a child," said Gerald Foston, whose fandom dates to the 1970s. "Unfortunately, growing up in the South Bronx, I didn't find many people who loved it like I did."

Then, in the 1990s and 21st century, soccer began attracting people from all regions, backgrounds and walks of life.

Some, including Randy Hernandez, came to it naturally. The California-born son of Mexican immigrants, he latched onto his local M.L.S. team, the Los Angeles Galaxy, and later to the U.S. national teams.

Others, such as Craig Hahn, adopted soccer when "it was still a very niche thing." Growing up in Pittsburgh, he played the sport but rarely found it on TV. The video game FIFA and later the internet became his gateways to global soccer. But it was American soccer — and the idea of "building to something, hopefully someday to win a World Cup," Hahn said — that "piqued my interest."

American soccer's gorgeous complication, though, has been that millions of Americans latch onto teams other than the U.S. team. When compared with other countries, and even with other

Continued on Page B14

Henry Bushnell is a senior soccer writer for The Athletic.

EDUARDO MUNOZ ALVAREZ/ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAMMERS S.C.

Top, the 2026 United States men's national soccer team, and above, the Sammers S.C., a prominent U.S.M.N.T. fan group.

U.S. OPENER ON FRIDAY

The Americans face Paraguay at 9 p.m. Eastern on Fox, Telemundo and Peacock.

STANLEY CUP FINALS For coverage of Game 5 between the Vegas Golden Knights and the Carolina Hurricanes, see Saturday's print editions and **nytimes.com**.

BRAD PENNER/IMAGN IMAGES

OG Anunoby with Karl-Anthony Towns during Game 4 on Wednesday. Anunoby's putback with 1.2 seconds left capped the biggest comeback in N.B.A. finals history.

COMMENTARY

A Sprint, a Leap and a Tap: Anunoby's Moxie Turns Magical

By MARCUS THOMPSON II
The Athletic

Basketball immortality typically arrives with flair: a dagger 3; a contested jumper worthy of a poster; a fearless drive through traffic and perhaps a thunderous dunk; a sudden steal; an emphatic block.

The moments that become legend, the ones etched into the psyche of fans who place their hearts on the altar of sports, tend to be acts of undeniable brilliance. Mastery executed under pressure.

But the biggest comeback in N.B.A. finals history, arguably the greatest victory the New York Knicks have ever had and probably the wildest experience at Madison Square Garden in two generations, came courtesy of an offensive rebound.

On a June night that Manhattan will tell stories about for decades, with the Knicks dangling between misery and miracle, salvation arrived in an unremarkable form. It was not genius, not artistry — just hustle.

There was a bricked 3, a failed blockout, then a perfectly timed burst and a gentle tap of the ball. New York's comeback from a 29-point deficit against the San Antonio Spurs in its 107-106 Game 4 win was punctuated by a tip-in with 1.2 seconds remaining. The mundane made the magic.

OG Anunoby, with his 40-inch vertical leap and 7-foot-2¼ wingspan, carved his name among Knicks legends Wednesday night. This time, glory did not go to the shooter but to the one who chased the miss. As has become the norm on this fairy-tale Knicks run, the improbable wound up feeling inevitable.

"That was a huge offensive rebound," Coach Mike Brown said. "Huge offensive rebound. He took on the challenge, and he went and won the game for us doing exactly what I called him out for during shootaround today."

Knicks fans chanted his name as they filed out of the arena. OG is an abbreviation for Ogugua, which, for the Igbo people in Nigeria, carries connotations of tranquillity and comfort. "The one who brings peace," in some translations.

On Wednesday night, Anunoby brought pandemonium. The quiet player from London provoked the loudest moment. The do-it-all forward flexed the depths of his contributions.

He scored 33 points on 15 shots and might have become the front-runner for the finals' most valuable player.

"OG is someone who brings it every night," Knicks point guard Jalen Brunson said. "His work ethic, since the moment I've been teammates with him and seen him, has grown. His confidence has grown just because of his work ethic. Everything that I've seen, he's gotten exponentially better at.

"So regardless of what the outside world thinks of him, we know what we have in our locker room, and we have a superstar in that locker room."

The N.B.A.'s obsession with size and athleticism made Anunoby a coveted player around the league. He remained with the Toronto Raptors through multiple trade deadlines as the team's asking price — reportedly multiple first-round picks — proved too rich for most suitors.

The Knicks acquired Anunoby in December 2023 for RJ Barrett, Immanuel Quickley and a second-round pick.

Masai Ujiri, the Raptors' president at the time, probably should have stuck to his asking price. Because after three seasons with the Knicks, Anunoby has looked worthy of a bounty of first-round picks. He is almost the perfect player for the modern game. A wing with the skills of a guard and the strength of a big, and someone athletic enough to keep up with either.

"When the shot went up," Anunoby said, "I was free. There was no one boxing me out. So I just went in there for a tip dunk and then ended up just tipping it in."

It was not just the tip-in by Anunoby. He was the engine of a furious comeback that silenced the haughtiness of center Victor Wembanyama, rattled the seemingly unflappable Spurs and left a basketball globe in disbelief.

The Knicks, who trailed by 20 with 9 minutes 33 seconds remaining, had the lead down to 14 when Anunoby checked back into the game.

Belief returned to the building. San Antonio spent the first 40 minutes of the game bleeding the Knicks dry of all rhythm and confidence. The defense of the Spurs, spearheaded by a true hound in guard Stephon Castle and anchored by Wembanyama, the defensive player of the year, had the Knicks completely out of sorts.

Angst filled the arena and drowned out the fervor that has become a trademark during this postseason. The raucous Garden hushed to a murmur. Wembanyama taunted and trolled the Knicks. The Spurs made nearly every shot they threw up. And the Knicks' N.B.A. title, which seemed inevitable after Game 2, felt like knockoff Louis Vuitton luggage by halftime of Game 4.

But belief gradually returned to the Knicks and to the Garden.

The Spurs cooled. Anunoby and Brunson got rolling. Somehow, the Knicks found themselves in the wheelhouse of their mojo. Every stop and every big shot ratcheted up the intensity in the Garden.

> **An offensive rebound saves the Knicks and enters N.B.A. lore.**

Karl-Anthony Towns started the rally in earnest with a step-back 3-pointer from the corner — his first fourth-quarter basket of the series — over Keldon Johnson. Just 11 seconds after checking back in at the 7:14 mark, Anunoby drilled a 3-pointer from the same area.

Brunson, who finished with 36 points on 12-of-25 shooting, scored on back-to-back possessions to pull the Knicks within 7 points, 99-92. Jose Alvarado drove and found Anunoby in the corner. Wembanyama summoned what juice he had left to run out to contest. But Anunoby drilled it. The Knicks trailed by 4.

The vibes returned. The same arena that was too stunned at halftime to give Wu-Tang a worthy energy suddenly shook in celebration. That feverish, percolating exuberance that has rattled opponents for two months finally showed up in the finals. The Spurs' eyes widened and knees quivered. Finally, their youth and inexperience showed.

A Brunson 3 over Wembanyama — the best kind of retaliation for the shot Wembanyama delivered on Brunson in Game 3 — brought the Knicks within one, 104-103. New York was close to cresting the hill, to scaling the psychological wall of the comeback.

So even though a pair of free throws by Castle reclaimed the lead for San Antonio, and even though Brunson's floater missed off the glass, winning was still on the table. The Knicks made it back to that mode where the universe catered to their command. And everybody, including the Spurs, so it seemed, sensed some cosmic theater would play out in the Knicks' favor.

That was perhaps the most critical gain from Game 4. The belief in their worthiness. The conviction of their inevitability.

That is what Anunoby confirmed Wednesday night.

First, he blocked Spurs guard De'Aaron Fox's baffling attempt for a transition layup with 11.1 seconds left, the kind of gaffe that lets everyone know the basketball gods have been binge-watching Clyde Frazier and Earl Monroe highlights.

"He does everything," Knicks guard Landry Shamet said of Anunoby. "He's a virtuoso."

Then, with 5.7 seconds remaining, the Knicks down a point, Anunoby inbounded the ball to Brunson, who launched a 3-pointer before the Spurs could bring the double-team. The 31-foot shot missed. And, for a moment, everything that haunted the Knicks for half a century loomed again.

Because Knicks fans know that feeling: the ball hanging in the air; hope suspended; disaster approaching.

When Brunson's shot banged off the front rim and into the anxious air of the Garden, the Knicks had all but lost back-to-back home games. They had squandered the two road games they had won to start the series. They had surrendered momentum and confidence to San Antonio. They had mounted pressure on themselves by resurrecting the dread of Knicks defeatism.

But because Wembanyama and Fox moved toward Brunson, Anunoby had an unimpeded lane to the rim.

So he took off toward it. Brown told him before the game that a player with his size — 6-7, 240 pounds — and athleticism should be a force on the offensive glass. Anunoby got to the peak of his jump faster than the Spurs rookie Dylan Harper and got up higher than San Antonio wing Devin Vassell.

The ball caromed too high for violence. So Anunoby chose touch. He redirected the rebound with a soft tap and, in the process, redirected the trajectory of the Knicks' franchise. The series went from almost being tied, 2-2, heading to Game 5 in San Antonio to the Knicks being ahead, 3-1, and one win from the coveted crown. Euphoria swept through the Garden.

This franchise spent generations haunted by bad luck at the rim. This fan base, this arena, still wears the agony of Charles Smith's four thwarted bunnies in the lane in 1993. And Patrick Ewing's missed finger roll in 1995. The inches that separated glory from grief. But Anunoby gave Knicks fans a new image to carry. His tip-in covers those scars like a fresh tattoo.

And for one night, OG became an acronym for Overlord of Gotham. Anunoby has been Officially Goated for the Overdue Glory he delivered by crashing the Offensive Glass.

A poetic justice exists in the Knicks winning this way. For it declares fate's refusal to let them down. Because this run has never really been about superiority, not in the traditional sense.

New York now needs one win to end a 53-year title drought. And the beauty of that fantastical truth is that it wasn't produced by a singular greatness or an obvious dominance. The Knicks, somehow, keep arriving at the same destination via roads that should have broken them.

This improbable run borders on mythology because of its unexplainable components, the almost spiritual force guiding this team to a glory ordained, clearly, by Spike Lee and Timothée Chalamet. It seems every great New York sports story eventually feels like destiny. As though it is being governed by forces bigger than coaching adjustments and analytical data.

The Knicks now live in a world where coincidence resembles prophecy. A space where the defining moment of a team, of a dream season, and perhaps a championship for the ages came courtesy of an offensive rebound. Oh, Goodness.

Marcus Thompson II is a senior columnist for The Athletic.

Enthusiasm Was Curbed. That Flipped In a Flash.

By SANTUL NERKAR

Perhaps no person better captured the agonizing final minutes of the Knicks' comeback victory in Game 4 of the N.B.A. finals on Wednesday night than the comedian Larry David, who was seated courtside at Madison Square Garden.

When the Knicks cut the San Antonio Spurs' lead to 4 points late in the fourth quarter, the television broadcast showed David unusually emotional. He was smiling, raising his arms and dapping up fellow Knicks fans.

Minutes later, with New York down just 1 point, Knicks guard Josh Hart missed an easy shot, squandering a chance at the lead. David staggered and nearly fell to the ground, clutching the arm of the tennis great John McEnroe beside him in a Knicks jersey and hat.

After the game, a 1-point victory secured, David was beaming once more.

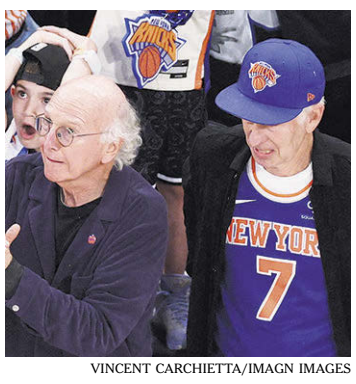
For hours, there had been little reason for Knicks fans to smile. Their beloved team, starved for a title, looked certain to lose, quelling the good vibes that had engulfed the city in recent weeks.

Things quickly changed.

The Knicks mounted the biggest comeback in N.B.A. finals history, led by the star players Jalen Brunson and OG Anunoby. But perhaps as remarkable as the swing itself was the change in the mood of fans across New York.

Inside the Garden, celebrities like Spike Lee, Taylor Swift and Timothée Chalamet danced near their courtside seats. Their expressions were of stunned disbelief. An hour or so earlier, fans inside the Garden could not even be cheered up by a special halftime performance by the Wu-Tang Clan.

Outside the arena, New Yorkers who had gathered in bars and on the street jumped for joy. The de facto party block for revelers had become West 35th Street, with crowds pressed against bar windows to watch the game inside.



VINCENT CARCHIETTA/IMAGN IMAGES

Larry David, John McEnroe and others rode a roller coaster of emotions at the Garden.

Drinks were spilled. Some people climbed trucks and destroyed property. Others ambled atop scaffolding. On an uptown A train, a jubilant fan wearing a Latrell Sprewell Knicks jersey cranked out pull-ups on the overhead handrail in honor of the winning team.

On Thursday morning, the Police Department said that as the game went on, crowds near the arena grew "increasingly destructive."

Early on, as the Spurs built a big lead, Knicks fans inside the Garden groaned in disbelief. They blamed the referees. They begged their team to grab a rebound.

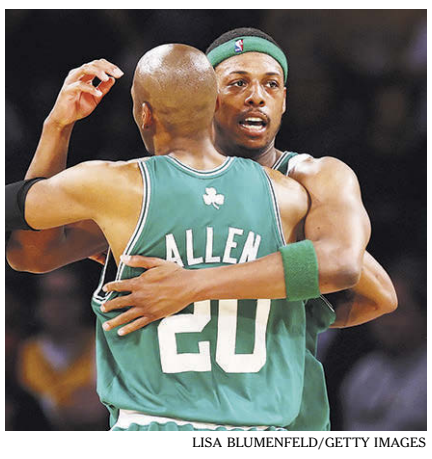
The tide turned in the second half, when Brunson and Anunoby made the crowd roar louder and louder with every made basket. The arena felt like it was rattling: an earthquake of joy and anticipation.

Then, the final play. A shot from Brunson missed, but Anunoby soared in to tip the ball through the net. The winning points. The end of the agony. And the beginning of a nightlong celebration.

Wesley Parnell contributed reporting.

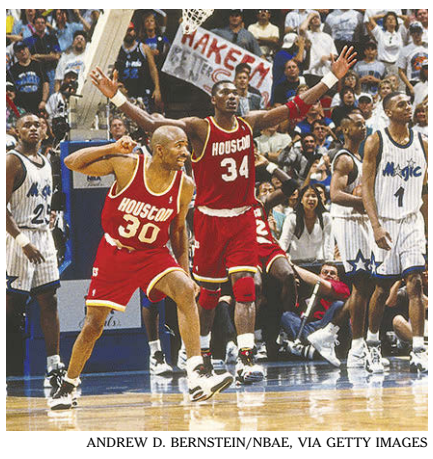
Memorable Comebacks

The Knicks' furious rally from a 29-point deficit joined a list of notable turnarounds in the N.B.A. finals. To the Spurs' chagrin, one of the other ones happened just last week.



LISA BLUMENFELD/GETTY IMAGES

2008, GAME 4 The Celtics stunned the Lakers after trailing by 24 points.



ANDREW D. BERNSTEIN/NBAE, VIA GETTY IMAGES

1995, GAME 1 The Rockets overcame a 20-point deficit against the Magic.

MIKE EHRMANN/GETTY IMAGES

2011, GAME 2 The Mavericks trailed the Heat by 15 but surged to a win.

ERIC GAY/ASSOCIATED PRESS

2026, GAME 1 The Knicks climbed out of a 14-point hole against the Spurs.

RONALD MARTINEZ/GETTY IMAGES

2012, GAME 1 The Thunder beat the Heat despite falling behind by 13.

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KNICKS VS. SPURS

GEOFF BURKE/IMAGN IMAGES

'It feels cool. I mean, everyone's pretty excited. I'm excited, too.' — OG ANUNOBY, about his game-winning tip-in with 1.2 seconds left.

World Cup

LUIS ANTONIO ROJAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Estadio Azteca in Mexico City hosted the opening match of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, between Mexico and South Africa, on Thursday. A quarter of the matches are likely to risk heat stress, experts say.

Also Expected to Take the Field at the World Cup: Hazardous Heat

By QUINN GLABICKI

As the world's elite soccer players take the field for the 2026 World Cup, heat, too, is expected to be right there with the athletes and spectators.

Since the last time World Cup matches were played in North America in 1994, the world has warmed roughly 1.3 degrees Fahrenheit. And the frequency of extreme heat in June and July has on average tripled across this year's 10 host cities that previously hosted World Cup games.

The numbers raise questions not only about the safety of players and fans, but also whether international soccer is prepared for an ever-warmer future caused by the burning of fossil fuels.

In recent days, the English team has practiced in the Miami sun in an effort to acclimatize its athletes and prepare for what could be one of the hottest tournaments on record. And last month a group of 21 scientists, including physiologists and climate experts, wrote to FIFA, the sport's governing body, saying that its current safety guidelines for heat were insufficient and "impossible to justify," and urging it to give players longer breaks and implement "aggressive" locker-room cooling, among other steps.

The previous World Cup tournament, played in Qatar in 2022, was scheduled during the winter months partly to avoid blazing temperatures.

This year's World Cup features 104 matches, or 40 more than any previous tournament, and a quarter of the games are likely to be played under conditions that risk heat stress, according to World Weather Attribution, a climate science research initiative at the Imperial College London.

A FIFA spokesman wrote in a statement that the organization is "committed to protecting the health and safety of all players, referees, fans, volunteers and staff." When forecasts indicate high temperatures, World Cup venues will "activate additional cooling capacity, including shaded areas, misting systems, cooling buses and expanded water distribution," he wrote, and FIFA has trained match doctors to use custom cooling bags that allow immediate treatment at any location.

This World Cup will be the first to implement mandatory three-minute cooling breaks midway through each half. The organization will also install climate-controlled benches for substitutes and staff at outdoor stadiums. Several matches have been scheduled for evening hours to account for higher daytime temperatures.

The heat risks are a consequence of global warming, climate scientists and others said. "Climate change is now affecting the spectacle that you see," said Mike Tipton, a professor of human applied physiology at the Extreme Environments Laboratory at the University of Portsmouth in England.

To measure the effect of heat danger on athletes, researchers generally use what's called a wet bulb globe temperature, which measures the combined effects of ambient air temperature, humidity, sun exposure and wind, and reflects the ability of the human body to cool itself.

At a wet bulb temperature of 26, heat strain becomes a risk for players, and this year a quarter of the 104 World Cup matches are expected to take place at that temperature or higher. Five of those games are likely to take place above the "unsafe" 28 degree threshold on the wet bulb globe scale, according to the World Weather Attribution estimates.

FIFA's guidelines call for potential postponement of a match at a wet bulb temperature of 32 degrees. That's higher than the 28-degree threshold recommended by other organizations including the players' union and the American College of Sports Medicine.

Under hot conditions, players can experience uncontrollable increases in deep body temperature, resulting in heat exhaustion and heat stroke, Tipton said. Games played in high temperatures tend to be less intense, he said. For example, sprinting frequency drops, players run shorter distances, and games are more likely to result in a penalty shootout.

Already this year, top athletes in other sports have been struggling to adapt to warmer conditions. At the French Open last month in Paris, amid the city's hottest May on record, the Czech tennis player Jakub Mensik collapsed on the court with cramps after playing for more than four and a half hours. He was taken to the locker room in a wheelchair by medical staff and called the heat "insane."

Even at the World Cup locations where climate-controlled stadiums will be able to reduce heat exposure (venues in Atlanta, Dallas and Houston are climate controlled), the WWA study notes that "dangerous conditions" will remain for fans as they watch from outdoor viewing areas, wait in long lines to enter stadiums or celebrate victories afterward.

The risks are particularly dangerous at venues without roofing or cooling facilities, according to Joyce Kimutai, a climate change attribution scientist at Imperial College of London. She pointed to Miami, Kansas City, Missouri, and Philadelphia as places likely to experience the "dangerously hot" 28 degree wet bulb temperature.

Fans who are older or very young, or who may have complicating health conditions, face higher risks too, Tipton said. He advised spectators to recognize early signs of heat illness including lightheadedness, fatigue, rapid pulse, cramps, and pins and needles and to prepare to "get somewhere in the shade, get horizontal and get hydrated."

'Relentless Optimism' And the American Fan

From First Sports Page

American sports, this is one of several dynamics that makes U.S. fandom distinct.

If, by contrast, you were born into a family of Newcastle United fans in England's northeast, you probably support Newcastle and England's national team. If you were born in Montevideo, Uruguay, you most likely support Peñarol or Club Nacional de Football, and almost certainly love the Uruguayan national team.

If, however, you are born in Wisconsin to parents who love the N.F.L.'s Green Bay Packers or in Washington, D.C., to parents who came from Colombia, you might feel no organic attachment to the U.S. team. In a family of immigrants, you might support the motherland's team.

And in Wisconsin, you would have to choose soccer — but you might choose F.C. Barcelona over a middling national team that never comes to your state, charges objectionable ticket prices and plays only a handful of meaningful games per year.

As a result, "the hard-core fan base for the U.S. team that travels around to different games is actually quite small," said Hahn, a member of the Sammers supporters' group.

The generational fandom that follows the Packers or New York Yankees, or Liverpool or the Colombian national team, does not yet exist in American soccer.

Others explain that the combination of the size of the country and the absence of a national stadium, which turns the U.S. team into a traveling circus, disrupts continuity and hinders the formation of any consistent, identifiable supporter culture.

Many U.S. supporters have even grown accustomed to feeling like away fans on American soil. Over the past few years, they have been outnumbered by Morocco supporters in Cincinnati; by Colombia supporters in Maryland; by Turkey supporters in Connecticut; by Guatemala supporters in St. Louis; by South Korea supporters in New Jersey; and by Mexico supporters virtually anywhere.

It is a byproduct of the country's diversity. The games are opportunities for immigrant families to lean into identities and feel connections to home. But still, said Monty Rodrigues, a longtime U.S. fan who emigrated from India when he was young, it "feels so weird, and it's disappointing and, at times, it's heartbreaking."

Some of those same fans of other countries, though, also develop attachments to the U.S. team. Elliott Montalvan, a New Yorker whose father moved to the United States from Ecuador as a teenager, remembers watching the Ecuadorean national team as a child and "the culture of being raised in an Ecuadorean household" being "very instilled into me."

But his father did not force any fandom on him. As he grew, he also fell in love with his local team, the 2015 M.L.S. expansion club New York City F.C., and then with the U.S. team.

When the American and Ecuadorean national teams would face off, he felt conflicted. "I mean, I grew up wearing Ecuadorean jerseys all my life," he explained — and his father still wore them. Nonetheless, Montalvan would throw on a U.S. jersey. He would watch with his father. "We'd sing both national anthems, and we'd celebrate every goal, no matter who it came from," he said.

RANDY HERNANDEZ

Elliott Montalvan, whose father came from Ecuador, now leads Barra 76, a U.S. national team supporters' group.

His story, and countless similar stories across the United States, are "what makes us unique," Montalvan said.

Whereas "Ecuadorean fans are Ecuadorean fans through and through," he explained for the sake of comparison, "here in the United States, it's a melting pot, bro. It's cliché to say, but like, you have everybody, from all ethnicities, celebrating and supporting U.S. soccer."

And now, as the president of Barra 76, a U.S. national team supporters' group, Montalvan lets that diversity drive the culture that he and others are trying to pioneer and shape.

"We have everybody's culture," he said. "It's like creating the ideal superhuman. Like, what's one superpower you want? Well, U.S.A. has got all of them."

He and others know that outside perceptions of U.S. soccer fan culture range from corny to shallow to nonexistent. With respect to match day atmospheres and chants, Montalvan said: "You see the commentary or the criticism: It looks very Chuck E. Cheese or it looks very cringe or it looks very, 'They don't know what they're doing.' It sounds very nursery rhyme-ish. Whatever elementary school adjective you want to give, that's what it sounds like."

But he and his peers see opportunity. Opportunity to change the perception. Opportunity to bring people in. Opportunity to blend soccer cultures and flavors from around the world — from Latin America to Eastern Europe, from Africa to China — and create something fresh.

"We don't want to copy; we want to be authentic," Hernandez, another Barra 76 member, said. "Sure, we're a nation of immigrants, but at the end of the day, we're the United States; we mix together to make something new."

And the 2026 World Cup, of course, is an unparalleled opportunity to do all of that.

For consequential games — World Cup qualifiers and continental championships — the U.S. team fan base expands multifold. The people obsessed with Barcelona or Arsenal become aware. The N.F.L. zealots who also follow their city's M.L.S. team, perhaps originally fueled by local pride, might tune in.

And then, when the World Cup rolls around, the base explodes. Patriotism swells. Bandwagons fill.

Some see analogies to the Olympics. But the men's World Cup is different. "If you're talking about the U.S. basketball team, hockey, baseball, the U.S. is always one of the favorites, or expected to win," Hahn explained. "In men's soccer, it's the opposite."

And that is part of the allure. It is an opportunity for America, the juggernaut of all juggernauts, the richest and most powerful country on the planet, to identify with an underdog.

"I don't know that I would care to go watch the U.S.A. baseball team play anywhere," said Christine Mule, a member of the American Outlaws supporters' group. "The U.S.A. basketball team plays in the Olympics, and they're pretty much going to crush anybody that they come up against."

Soccer, on the other hand, "is still in a phase where it's growing," she continued. And people want to grow with it.

That is part of why the diehards travel to games, enduring awkward conversations with locals who do not even know it is happening.

"It's the opposite of front-running," said Jon Strauss, a fan from the Boston area since the 1990s. "It's that ethos: Get in on the ground floor and work your way up."

And it is part of why millions will jump aboard and join them this summer. It's to build, and rise, together.

And when they all do, for hours or days at a time, the fragmented fan base will feel like one. Complications will be forgotten. Differences will dissipate.

"There's this unifying force," Trevin Wurm, an American Outlaws staff member, said of U.S. team games. No matter the locale, "it's the same country, it's people cheering toward the same goal and coming together to create community before the game and celebrating the team in the stadium. It's kind of this amazing thing."

BASEBALL

The Most Gen Z Team in the Majors Has Found a Couple of Leaders

By SPENCER NUSBAUM
The Athletic

James Wood and C.J. Abrams sat in the Washington Nationals' dugout on a weekday afternoon and let their gravitational pull take over. Within seconds, Daylen Lile moseyed over next to Wood. Then came Jacob Young and Nasim Nuñez. When Wood and Abrams rose, they did, too. The bench filled, and emptied, at their behest.

When they joke, others add on. When they hit, others tend to follow. There was a momentum to the conversation, however quiet it began.

"I feel like those kinds of things happen naturally," Wood said of assuming leadership.

"It comes naturally," Abrams said. "You've got to lead by example."

Blake Butera, the team's first-year manager, has never directly asked Abrams or Wood to fill the team's leadership vacuum. Not when the Nationals failed to sign a position player to an M.L.B. deal this winter. Not when they had an anemic offense this spring. Not even now, as the oldest Nationals player to take an at-bat this season is all of 28 years old.

Wood and Abrams have filled the void anyway, lifting the best offense in baseball. The ahead-of-schedule Nationals sit at 35-34 after taking two of three from the San Francisco Giants this week.

In a 4-3 victory on Monday, Wood scored the team's only run off Giants starter Logan Webb. Abrams delivered the game-tying single with one out in the ninth. Wood was 3 for 5 in a 6-3 win on Tuesday.

Wood is a most valuable player candidate with a .941 on-base plus slugging percentage; Abrams is close behind with his .905 O.P.S. Through Wednesday, Wood led M.L.B. in runs; Abrams ranked third in runs batted in. Both are walking more, striking out less and hitting the ball harder.

The batting cages at Nationals Park are noisier. The nights are longer, as Wood, 23, and Abrams, 25, who is still in the thick of trade rumors, stay later and later while their teammates try to keep up.

Spencer Nusbaum covers the Nationals for The Athletic.

ALYSSA MCDANIEL/MLB PHOTOS VIA GETTY IMAGES

The Nationals' keep it loose. From left: Nasim Nuñez, C.J. Abrams, Daylen Lile and James Wood.

JESS RAPFOGEL/GETTY IMAGES

With their power and athleticism, the 25-year-old Abrams, top, and the 23-year-old Wood are leading a young team by example.

Last week, a shipment of gray T-shirts arrived at the Nationals' clubhouse. The shirts featured one of the team's more widespread images: Abrams's face, with his mouth agape, as teammates showered his face with sunflower seeds after a home run. One player grabbed scissors and made one into a crop top. A couple of coaches slipped one on.

A few hours later in the dugout, the T-shirts became yet another thing Abrams and Wood could laugh about as they held court.

"I think not having vets this year, I think once you look around, you realize you kind of are that guy now, probably," said Young, who was wearing one of the shirts.

It is impossible to siphon Wood's power. There is no lesson plan to teach Abrams's athleticism. Neither views himself as a leader. But coaches and teammates have heard the nonchalant duo subtly instruct M.L.B.'s most Gen Z offense using their advanced comprehension of the game.

When Lile made his M.L.B. debut last year, he watched Wood's cage routine and borrowed a drill that simplified the path his bat took to the ball. This year, Lile asks Wood more questions related to his approach, which often includes predictions for a pitcher's game plan.

But why do teammates listen?

That question elicited a range of responses. Wood suggested his candor might be responsible. If Wood does not know how to solve a specific pitcher, he will not pretend he can. If he has an answer, he will not superimpose his swing onto another hitter. It is about as natural as coaching can be — neither Wood nor Abrams actively seeks out teammates.

> Two players, then prospects, acquired by the Nationals in the 2022 Soto trade.

Other Nationals naturally flock their way.

"Anything they need, anything I need, we got each other's back," Abrams said. "We're all learning together here, day by day. We're getting better. It's just fun."

Other players pointed toward other rationales. Many players look toward those who perform best, the same way anyone might in the workplace. There is a steady maturation and vulnerability. Abrams is present, teammates said this year, and Wood's affable smile has emerged in more public settings. Some might call them swing doctors. And it does not hurt that the team's three best hitters — Abrams, Wood and Curtis Mead — are often the last to leave at night.

"It's just contagious," Luis Garcia Jr. said through an interpreter. "I mean, you try to do it too, to try to have the season they're having."

"He's not going to rah-rah you to death, but he will show you what he sees," Young said of Abrams. "What he is looking for in a pitcher, for instance. What he feels. What he sees in your swing in the cages. Whatever he can, in a manner that is comfortable, to help his teammates win."

Butera said: "C.J. has been an absolute pro about how he's gone about this. You see the rumors all the time, whether it's this off-season, whether it's spring training, whether it's now."

After a series in early May, Lile asked Wood how he could extricate himself from a slump. Just a few more walks, Wood said, would be more helpful than trying to swing his way out of it. Over the next 10 games, Lile posted an O.P.S. over 1.000. On Monday night, his go-ahead hit followed Abrams's two-run knock. For the Giants series, he was 6 for 11 with five runs batted in. So perhaps there is a proof of concept, too.

The Nationals are on a pace to have about 4,350 plate appearances come from players 25 or younger, which would be the second most of any team in the last century. Their two leaders were still prospects in 2022 when they arrived in the Juan Soto trade.

But players and coaches said that, if anything, the youth has helped curate an authentic, genuine environment. Abrams, in particular, has done so under immense pressure related to trade rumors, which he cannot avoid.

"I'd imagine every team in baseball is going to want him," Butera said. "We want him, too.

"We're playing some pretty meaningful games and stressful games. But when you look at C.J. and Woody, they're just going about their business. They're having fun. They're playing the game they love to play.

"We want our guys to feel that. We would much rather them be loose and playing free rather than being uptight or tense. And I think C.J. and Woody are the perfect two to kind of lead that charge."

Or maybe, Wood said, authenticity is just what this sport elicits.

"I feel like baseball kind of brings it out of you," Wood said. "You're with everybody for 162 days. If you're faking something, I mean, it's going to be hard to fake it for an entire year."

ANALYSIS

Southern Flavor And a Newcomer On a Hot Streak

By MITCH LIGHT
The Athletic

One year after the men's College World Series included teams from six different conferences as well as one independent, the 2026 field is dominated by the SEC.

Georgia, the No. 3 overall seed, headlines the field and is joined by Texas, Alabama, Mississippi and Oklahoma from the Southeastern Conference, North Carolina from the Atlantic Coast Conference, West Virginia from the Big 12 and Troy from the Sun Belt.

Here's what to know about the 2026 C.W.S., which begins Friday afternoon at Charles Schwab Field in Omaha.

Road Dawgs

Georgia Coach Wes Johnson has made it no secret that he builds his roster with his home ballpark — home-run-friendly Foley Field — in mind.

He prefers pitchers with high rates of strikeouts and ground balls, and he can live with some swings and misses from his hitters if they have high fly-ball rates. The formula has worked. In Johnson's three seasons, the Bulldogs are 99-20 at home, including a stellar 34-11 in the SEC.

Their performance on the road was not quite as good until this season. In Johnson's first two years, the Bulldogs went a combined 23-21 in road/neutral site games, including 13-19 versus SEC teams (13-17 regular season, 0-2 SEC tournament). This year, Georgia is 15-5 away from home, including 14-4 against SEC opponents (11-4 regular season, 3-0 SEC tournament).

And it wasn't as though the Dawgs feasted on the bottom half of the league. They won road series against three teams that hosted games in the N.C.A.A. tournament (Auburn, Texas A&M and Mississippi State) and two No. 2 seeds (Ole Miss and Arkansas).

It's not the first time an SEC team has won road series against five eventual N.C.A.A. tournament teams — Arkansas did it most recently, in 2021 — but it is likely the most impressive single-season road performance in league history. And it bodes well for the next week-plus of neutral-site games.

The Long Ball

The home run has been a critical part of the college game in recent years, but the long ball alone will not get a team to Omaha.

Georgia is the only team in the 2026 C.W.S. field that ranks in the top 10 nationally in home runs. The Bulldogs lead Division I with 174, 24 more than any other team.

Ole Miss is tied for 14th with 107, and Texas is 21st with 103. None of the other C.W.S. teams hit more than 100. West Virginia hit only 55, ranked 147th in Division I.

Georgia's Daniel Jackson leads all players in the C.W.S. with 31 home runs, which is tied for third nationally. There are four other players in the top 20: Aiden Robbins, Texas (24, tied for 10th); Tristan Bissetta, Mississippi (23, tied for 14th); Judd Utermark, Mississippi (22, tied for 18th); and Carson Tinney, Texas (22, tied for 18th).

World Series Coaches

This is the first time since 1948 and the only time since the field expanded to eight teams in 1950 that no C.W.S. team is coached by an alumnus. Last year, four of the eight coaches were at their alma maters — Arkansas's Dave Van Horn, Arizona's Chip Hale, Coastal Carolina's Kevin Schnall and Oregon State's Mitch Canham.

Two of this year's coaches played in the C.W.S.: Troy's Skylar Meade at Louisville in 2007 and Mississippi's Mike Bianco at Louisiana State in 1989 and 1990. Meade, a left-handed pitcher, allowed two hits and no runs in 2⅓ innings of a 12-4 win over Mississippi State. Bianco was the starting catcher for the Tigers in both C.W.S. appearances and hit a two-run home run in 1989 against Miami.

Bianco is the only coach this year who has won a national championship, in 2022 with the Rebels (over Oklahoma). Bianco and Johnson both won national championships as assistant coaches: Bianco won three at L.S.U., in 1993, 1996 and 1997, while Johnson won in 2023 as the pitching coach at L.S.U.

Texas' Jim Schlossnagle is the only coach who has taken another program to the C.W.S. He went five times with Texas Christian, including four straight (2014-17), and twice with Texas A&M. He reached the finals in 2024 with the Aggies, losing in three games to Tennessee.

Troy's Story

Troy's run to its first College World Series has been fueled by an offense that is hitting .343 with a 1.028 on-base plus slugging percentage and 15 home runs in seven N.C.A.A. tournament games. This is quite the torrid stretch for a team that hit .280 with an .860 O.P.S. and 72 home runs in 56 regular-season games.

Junior Jabe Boroff has been the breakout star for the Trojans, with a 1.764 O.P.S. and six home runs in 30 plate appearances in the tournament. Not bad for a player who entered the postseason hitting .149 with a .731 O.P.S. and only one home run in 59 plate appearances.

Other than Boroff, the sophomore catcher Jimmy Janicki is the name to know for Troy. The Illinois native, considered a potential first-round pick in the 2027 M.L.B. draft, is hitting .341 with 19 home runs and 85 R.B.I.

Draft Watch

Future first-round picks have typically made regular appearances at the College World Series. But there were only three players at last year's C.W.S. who then were drafted in the first round the following month, and there may be even fewer this year.

The right-handed Ole Miss pitcher Cade Townsend and Alabama shortstop Justin Lebron are the only two players at the C.W.S. who rank in the top 50 of Keith Law's most recent big board for the 2026 M.L.B. draft.

There will, of course, be opportunities for players to move up draft boards over the next week-plus. Last year, Arkansas pitcher Gage Wood no doubt improved his stock after throwing a no-hitter (with 19 strikeouts) against Murray State in an elimination game. One month later, Wood was picked No. 26 overall by the Philadelphia Phillies.

On that note, the Ole Miss right-hander Taylor Rabe, who has been the Rebels' best pitcher in the postseason, appeared in Law's first-round mock that published on Wednesday, but is not on his top-100 list (for now).

Getting elite high school players to campus is always a challenge, even in the name, image and likeness era.

The eight C.W.S. teams combined to sign 16 of the top 100 players in Perfect Game's Class of 2025 recruiting rankings. Nine of the 16 enrolled in college, headlined by the SEC freshman of the year Anthony Pack Jr.

Omaha Experience

North Carolina, Ole Miss and Oklahoma are the only three teams in the field that have reached the C.W.S. during the five-year eligibility window of the current seniors.

There are several current Tar Heels who were on the 2024 team that went 1-2 in Omaha, most notably second baseman Gavin Gallaher and pitcher Jason DeCaro. Gallaher went 0-for-12 in three games. DeCaro got the start in North Carolina's first game at the C.W.S. and allowed four hits and one earned run in four innings of a 3-2 win over Virginia.

Hunter Elliott is the only current Mississippi player who was on the 2022 championship team — and he played a vital role as a true freshman. In two starts, he allowed a total of nine hits and three earned runs over 13 innings, including 6⅔ innings in the clincher over Oklahoma.

No current Oklahoma players were on the 2022 team that reached the C.W.S.

In addition to Elliott and the North Carolina players, eight players in the 2026 field were on other teams that reached the C.W.S., though not all of them actually played in Omaha: Alabama catcher/outfielder Brady Neal (L.S.U.), Georgia pitcher Matt Scott (Stanford), Mississippi second baseman Dom Decker (Murray State), Mississippi catcher Austin Fawley (Kentucky), Oklahoma pitcher Jason Bodin (Texas A&M), Texas third baseman Temo Becerra (Stanford), Texas outfielder Ashton Larson (L.S.U.) and West Virginia pitcher Bryson Thacker (Tennessee).

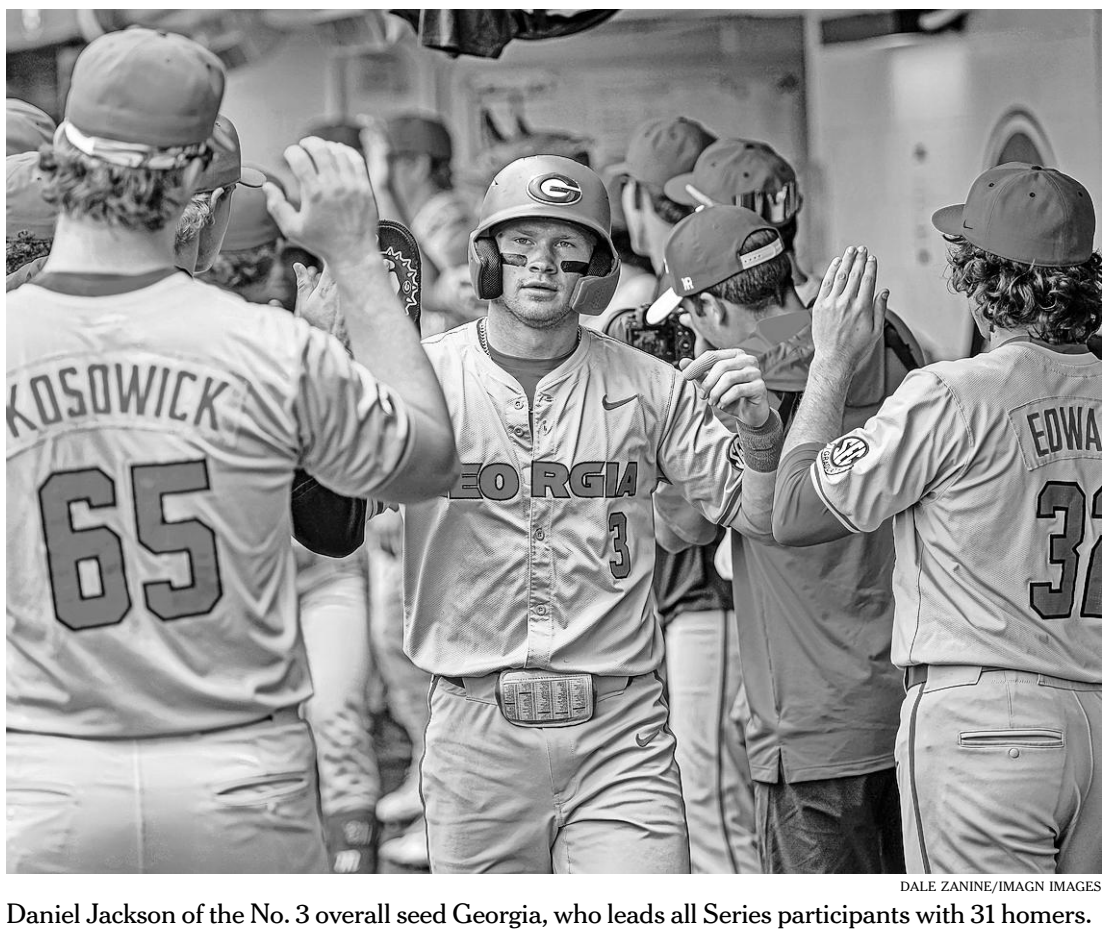
By the Numbers

The eight teams in Omaha have a combined 84 appearances in the College World Series and 10 national championships. Texas is responsible for nearly half of the those appearances (39) and more than half (six) of the titles.

North Carolina is next with 13 appearances, followed by Oklahoma (12), Georgia (seven), Mississippi (seven) and Alabama (six). This is the first trip for both Troy and West Virginia.

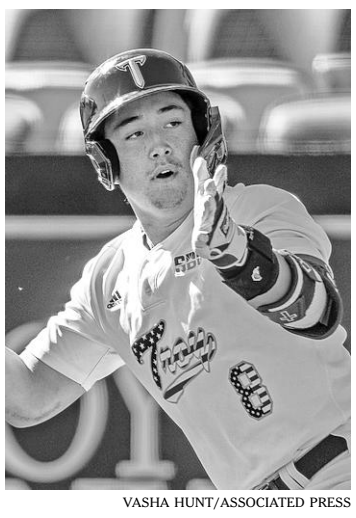
The other teams to win it all: Oklahoma with two titles and Ole Miss and Georgia with one each.

Mitch Light is a senior college sports editor for The Athletic.



DALE ZANINE/IMAGN IMAGES

Daniel Jackson of the No. 3 overall seed Georgia, who leads all Series participants with 31 homers.



VASHA HUNT/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jabe Boroff of Troy, which enters on a roll, having batted .343 as a team in qualifying.

The Athletic
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3 THEATER

Reflections on a wordsmith for the ages.

BY TIM TEEMAN

5 FILM REVIEW

You've never seen a president like this before.

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

7 ART

Shining a light and showing a way forward.

BY JONATHAN GRIFFIN

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Weekend Arts

The New York Times

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MANOHLA DARGIS | FILM REVIEW

UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT

From left, Tommy Martinez, Emily Blunt and Josh O'Connor in "Disclosure Day." Directed by Steven Spielberg and written by David Koepp, the sci-fi adventure also features aliens, though they largely hover in the background.

Spielberg in His Maximalist Element

The filmmaker flaunts his strengths and references his greatest hits in a fast-paced sci-fi epic.

STEVEN SPIELBERG'S "Disclosure Day" is one of those movies that sweeps you up from the start and rarely lets you down. A rollicking science-fiction adventure, it finds Spielberg revisiting a genre that he has populated with charming and horrifying extraterrestrials, genetically engineered dinosaurs and plugged-in psychics, and which has inspired some of his most popular and critical successes. The first time I watched the new movie, I scribbled *I am having so much fun* in my notebook. It was a nonsensical thing to write down as well as redundant. I didn't need a reminder of the contact high that stayed with me after the credits.

Most overtly, "Disclosure Day" serves as a companion piece to "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," the 1977 blockbuster which, two years after "Jaws," solidified Spielberg's status as a New Hollywood chart-buster. In the decades that followed, he began to broaden his horizons with self-consciously serious, weighty subjects in films that were greeted in some quarters as evidence of his maturity. Throughout, he also continued to return to science fiction, an elastic genre that allowed him to stick to familiar types, pet themes and narrative patterns even as he pushed himself yet further stylistically, technically and cosmically.

Disclosure Day
Directed by Steven Spielberg

There's a lot going on in "Disclosure Day," story wise and otherwise, but its maximalism is coherent and strategic. It was written by David Koepp, a genre adept who's provided Steven Soderbergh with some of his

CONTINUED ON PAGE C6

JASON FARAGO | CLOSE READ

For Art's Big Skeptic, History Is a Blur

Gerhard Richter came up with a new way forward for landscape painting.

GERHARD RICHTER; VIA DAVID ZWIRNER

"Garmisch" (1981) is among the works of Gerhard Richter that are on display at the David Zwirner gallery.

AT LEFT IS "GARMISCH," a painting of a Bavarian winter resort by Gerhard Richter, from 1981. The Olympics took place in that Alpine village once. Adolf Hitler was there to inaugurate them, just as he did in Berlin.

The color palette is narrow. A steely blue-gray cloud swallows the peaks in the distance. Out there we cannot make out features, contours; the edges vanish, the sky flares to white.

But then look in the foreground, at the hardy Alpine scrub. Look how blurry the leaves are. Nature has been denatured. The green in front of our faces appears just as indistinct as the mountains miles away.

Here is a landscape of lost innocence. Here, enveloped in mist, is a landscape of a contradictory heart.

"Garmisch" is one of 26 paintings on view in "Gerhard Richter: Landschaften," at David Zwirner in New York: a perfectly paced showcase of paintings from the 20th century that, at the same time, makes a direct argument about how to live in the 21st.

This 94-year-old heavyweight of German painting may feel commonplace to encounter now. His blurry, staticky pictures, some as famous as his Sonic Youth album cover and as expensive as an F-16 Falcon, have become milestones in his lifelong effort to face up to the void left by the last century's

CONTINUED ON PAGE C8

Coming Soon To Your TV

This summer's television and streaming schedule includes the return of some old favorites and an array of newcomers. Page 10

OFF BROADWAY ROUNDUP
By LAURA COLLINS-HUGHES

MARK SENIOR

Sting, center, is an ailing foreman at a shipyard in his musical "The Last Ship," which ends its brief run at the Metropolitan Opera on Sunday.

Revivals and Festivals Galore

A musical from Sting, a can't-miss 'Henry VI' and showcases from Clubbed Thumb and others.

'Furniture Boys'

The writer-performer Emily Weitzman's surreal feminist comedy envisions past boyfriends as household objects. The Guardian called the solo show "a very well-made play," noting Weitzman's "off-kilter energy that recalls Kristen Schaal and Chelsea Peretti." *(Through Saturday at SoHo Playhouse; sohoplayhouse.com)*

'The Last Ship'

Sting stars as the ailing foreman of a declining shipyard in this revised version of his musical, which went to Broadway in 2014 and now has new songs and a new book by Barney Norris. *(Through Sunday at the Metropolitan Opera; metopera.org)*

'Rent'

The neuro-inclusive Epic Players perform Jonathan Larson's "La Bohème"-inspired rock musical, directed by Travis Burbee and Cassidy Kaye. *(Through June 20 at A.R.T./New York Theaters; art-newyork.org)*

'I Wanttt a Unicorn Frappe!!!'

Wedding culture is among the targets of this stressed-out comedy by Catherine Weingarten, in which a newly minted fiancée forges through the morass of event planning, aided by a prince on a unicorn. Alex Tobey directs the world premiere. *(Through June 21 at the Tank; thetanknyc.org)*

'North Star'

The speeches that the American abolitionist Frederick Douglass made during a visit to Belfast, Northern Ireland, inspired this music and spoken-word show, created and directed by Kwame Daniels. Heads up: Most of the audience stands throughout. *(Through June 21 at the Irish Arts Center; irishartscenter.org)*

Sugar Sugar!

Now in its second year, this weeknight outdoor performance festival puts experimental puppetry, dance and performance art onstage in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, in the waterfront amphitheater at Domino Square. Admission is free. *(Through June 25 at Domino Park; dominopark.com)*

Criminal Queerness Festival

New works by Palestinian, Egyptian and Syrian theater makers take the stage in this year's edition of the festival from National Queer Theater, which focuses on artists from countries where queerness is criminalized or subjected to censorship. *(Through June 27 at Here Arts Center; here.org)*

'Blooming in Dry Season'

New Federal Theater teams up with North Carolina Black Repertory Company to produce this new play by Eljon Wardally. With original calypso music by Etienne Charles, it's set in Grenada, where a steel pan player's parents disagree over her future. *(Through June 28 at WP Theater; wptheater.org)*

Clubbed Thumb Summerworks

At this annual festival of often oddball new plays, Annie Tippe directs Nadja Leonhard-Hooper's "Derangements" (through Friday), with Crystal Finn among the actors and costumes by Brenda Abbandandolo, who was nominated for a Tony this year for her work on "Dog Day Afternoon." Wrapping up the season, Tara Ahmadinejad directs Bailey Williams's "The Family Dog" (Thursday-June 30), with Sarah Steele in the cast. *(Through June 30 at Wild Project; thewildproject.org)*

'Birthright'

Fresh off his riotous production of "Mother Russia," Teddy Bergman stages this play by Jonathan Spector ("Eureka Day") about a group of longtime friends who years ago took a Birthright trip to Israel. The cast includes Eli Gelb ("Stereophonic"). *(Through July 12 at MCC Theater; mcctheater.org)*

WILLIAM P. STEELE

Members of the National Asian American Theater Company in its production of "Henry VI" from 2018, which it is remounting.

'Henry VI'

This is don't-miss-it Shakespeare from the National Asian American Theater Company: a remount of its gripping 2018 production, whose bloody power-struggle action occurs between the events of "Henry V" and "Richard III." The adapter-director Stephen Brown-Fried has condensed the mammoth trilogy into two parts played in rep by a thrilling cast that includes Jon Norman Schneider as Henry VI, Mia Katigbak as Gloucester, Rajesh Bose as York, Julyana Soelistyo as Richard and Teresa Avia Lim as Margaret, Shakespeare's most fascinating woman. *(Through July 19 at the Public Theater; publictheater.org)*

'Heated Rivalry: The Unauthorized Musical Parody'

Starring a glowering Jay Armstrong Johnson as Ilya and a darling Jimin Moon as Shane, this daffily clever comedy hits the sweet spot. Written by Dylan MarcAurele and directed by Alan Kliffer, it's a sendup of the HBO Max drama, making affectionate fun of its borrowed tale of tortured love, hot sex and hockey while rooting for its heroes' happiness. *(Through Sept. 7 at the 6th Floor Theater at Culture Club; heatedrivalryparody.com)*

'Are You Now or Have You Ever Been'

Anna D. Shapiro directs a rotating-cast revival of Eric Bentley's transcript-based play about the 1940s House Committee on Un-American Activities hearings. Brooks Ashmanskas, Steven Boyer and Michael McKean are part of the core ensemble, with Andrew McCarthy, Jay O. Sanders, Billy Eugene Jones, Thomas Sadoski, Bob Odenkirk and Molly Ringwald among the slated guest stars. *(Through Sept. 11 at New York City Center; nycitycenter.org)*

'Camping'

Two best friends, a single tent, a decades-spanning relationship. Colby Minifie and Alice Kremelberg star in the world premiere of Victoria Lynne Barclay's play, directed by Adrienne Campbell-Holt for Colt Coeur. *(Saturday-July 11 at Here Arts Center; here.org)*

'The Loved Ones'

Alana Raquel Bowers ("Cold War Choir Practice"), Donna Lynne Champlin, Clare O'Malley and Maryann Plunkett perform Erica Murray's play about four women who meet in an Irish farmhouse, two grieving the same man, another expecting a new life. *(Saturday-Aug. 2 at Irish Repertory Theater; irishrep.org)*

'A Walk on the Moon'

The 1999 romance movie starring Diane Lane and Viggo Mortensen inspired this new musical adaptation, set in the Catskills in the summer of 1969, when a married woman lets herself feel some freedom. Directed by Sheryl Kaller, it has a book by Pamela Gray, who wrote the screenplay, and music and lyrics by Ann-Marie Milazzo. *(Monday-Aug. 22 at Laura Pels Theater; roundabouttheatre.org)*

'Pea Dinneen: Raising Her Voice'

A mini memoir of trans life and liberation, set to pop music. When Pea Dinneen performed this show at Dublin Fringe Festival in 2025, The Irish Times gave it five stars, calling it an "eloquent cabaret play." *(Tuesday-June 28 at Irish Repertory Theater; irishrep.org)*

'La Cage aux Folles'

Billy Porter stars as the drag artist Albin opposite Wayne Brady as his partner, Georges, in Robert O'Hara's Encores! staging of Harvey Fierstein and Jerry Herman's musical comedy. The all-Black cast includes Tonya Pinkins, James Jackson Jr., Peter Francis James, Sharon Washington and Lance Coadie Williams. *(Wednesday-June 28 at New York City Center; nycitycenter.org)*

'The Tune Up: A Juneteenth Celebration'

The playwright Suzan-Lori Parks is also a musician. In her "Tune Up" series of performances with her band, the Joyful Noise, she mixes music, dance and microplays, along with smart patter and vibrant guest artists. Crystal Lucas-Perry is on tap for this one, directed and choreographed by Niegel Smith. The show intends to be a balm. And it's free. *(June 19 at David Rubenstein Atrium; lincolncenter.org)*

JULIETTA CERVANTES

The playwright Suzan-Lori Parks, center, at the 2025 edition of "Tune Up," her performance series mixing music, dance and microplays.

OLGA KUZMENKO

Pea Dinneen in "Raising Her Voice" at Dublin Fringe Festival last year. The show is at Irish Repertory Theater starting on Tuesday.

5 NEW CLASSICAL ALBUMS

'HOFFNUNG'

Samuel Hasselhorn, baritone; Ammiel Bushakevitz, piano (Harmonia Mundi)

For Franz Schubert, 1826 was a year of peaks and valleys. Financially challenged but gaining acclaim, veering between periods of inspiration and writer's block, he nevertheless wrote some of his loveliest — and most underrated — lieder, or art songs. See the gorgeously ambivalent "Alinde" or the sensitive "Im Freien," which opens this album, featuring the baritone Samuel Hasselhorn and the pianist Ammiel Bushakevitz.

This release is the third entry in a five-part series called "Schubert: 200," a collection of Schubert's lieder output from 1823 to his death in 1828. "Hoffnung" ("Hope") offers some gems, displaying Schubert at his most varied; brash drinking songs rub shoulders with melancholy musings, while hymnic declamations of German Romantic poetry follow Schubert's only settings of Shakespeare. Hasselhorn and Bushakevitz bring out equal measures of tension and tenderness, grounded by Hasselhorn's warm, nuanced baritone. Schubert enthusiasts may find less-trodden ground here, but the interpretations transcend mere historical curiosity. And if these songs feel too much like deep cuts, next year's project will return to a familiar favorite: 2027 is the bicentennial of "Winterreise." *GABRIELLE FERRARI*

'WINGED IN COLLAPSE'

Martyna Basta (7K)

On Martyna Basta's "Winged in Collapse," intimacy and expansiveness exist in a single gesture. Delicious whispers entrap us: "I will always remember your hands, how they held me, until nothing else," she hisses on "Hands Want To." Then, with a flash of roomy strings, the moment is shattered. Basta squints at the lover right beneath her nose, then revulses, suddenly aware of her surroundings, and consumed by their scope. Such pushes and pulls drive her quiet, absorbing creation.

Basta is a Polish composer and producer based in Krakow and releases on the Berlin-based imprint 7K, home to albums, like "Hymnal" by Alif Hilal (formerly known as Lyra Pramuk), that fray the edges of composition, sound art and chamber pop. There's a composed sensibility to Basta's work; occasional, Arvo Pärt-like string gleamings jump out of a noisier palette closer to Salvatore Sciarrino or Krzysztof Penderecki. Three vocal contributions — Adam Markiewicz's steely falsetto, james K's angelic haze and Rainy Miller's poetry — guide the album into different timbral spaces altogether.

Basta has an ability to hold listeners when few things are happening. But when a muffled backbeat arrives on the final track, "Say It Closely," it marks closure, release and acknowledgment: It's exhausting being on the edge. *HUGH MORRIS*

PHILLIP GOLUB: 'PARTISAN SHIP'

(Berthold Records)

Technically, this is a jazz album, given its robust swinging energy and its improvisatory flights. But already in Phillip Golub's young career, his writing and keyboard playing have revealed compositional ambitions that transcend genre, as with the avant-Baroque flourishes he pursued as a harpsichordist and pianist on the 2024 recording "Abiding Memory."

This time out, Golub is focused on microtonality. He slices the octave anew through a specially designed Flexichord that he also plays. And yet his buoyant motifs, often cellular in the way of early Minimalist ear worms, have warmth.

In Golub's designs, there's a delightful feel for his ensemble's talents, even though some parts were recorded individually. Still, a collective sensibility is there during the buzzing frenzy you'll find in "loyalty oath," and also in the haunting melodic quality of "blue-orange reflections" (which features Layale Chaker on five-string violin). Personally, I'm looking forward to hearing Golub and his associates present this imaginative music together live, at an album release concert on July 7 at the restaurant Sisters in Brooklyn. *SETH COLTER WALLS*

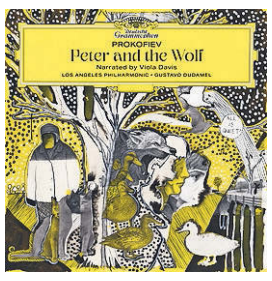
MARTINU: THE SYMPHONIES

Bamberg Symphony; Jakub Hrusa, conductor (Deutsche Grammophon)

What a breath of joy this recording is. The six symphonies of the Czech composer Bohuslav Martinu, all written in America between 1942 and 1953, show a compositional voice as distinct as any of his better-known peers: tonally inflected, rhythmically pointed and showing a deft command of orchestral texture. Light and air abound in Martinu's sound, and if it has its share of conflict, it also largely eschews the deep political and personal angst (and orchestral bombast) that suffuses so much other wartime music.

The symphonies are also wonderfully multifaceted, despite Martinu's clear fingerprints. The terse melodies and busy cross-rhythms in much of the First guide a listener one way, but the somber Largo knocks those expectations sideways. Similarly, the tumultuous Third seems bound to end in victory, but an unexpected dissipation of energy leads to a more equivocal conclusion. The Sixth exists in its own oblique atmosphere, worlds away from the crisp, clear timbres heard elsewhere; it's as if, having spoken so clearly in earlier works, the composer was suddenly hesitant to reveal too much. All of it repays engaged listening, and Jakub Hrusa and his virtuosic orchestra are enthusiastic, committed guides. *DAVID WEININGER*

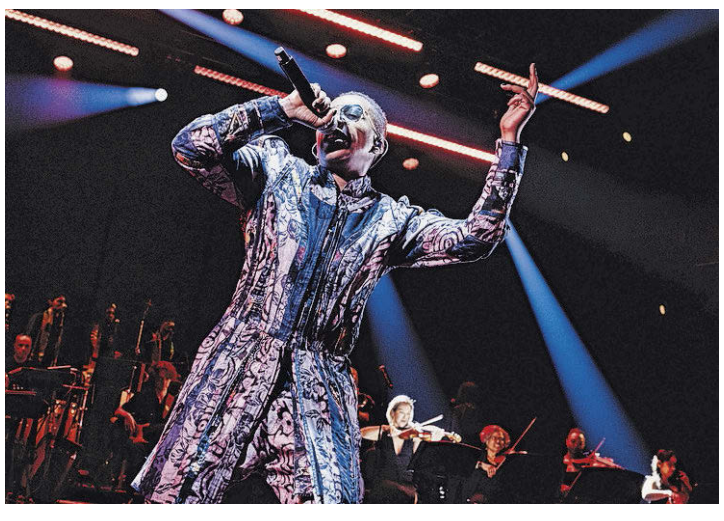
PROKOFIEV: 'PETER AND THE WOLF'

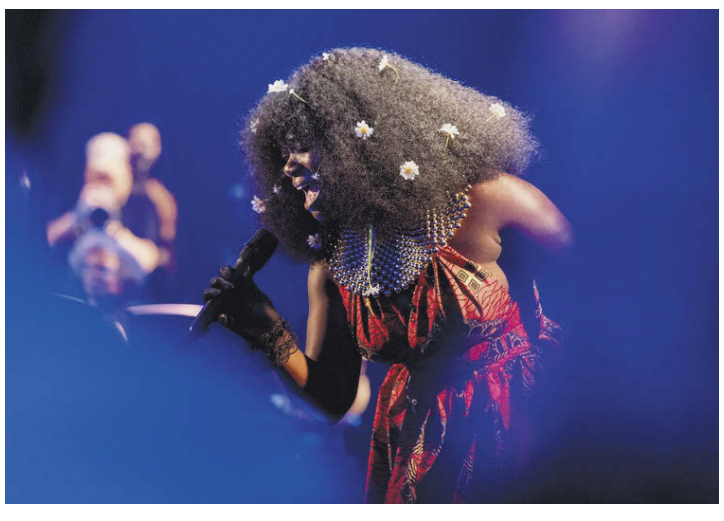


Los Angeles Philharmonic; Viola Davis, narrator; Gustavo Dudamel, conductor (Deutsche Grammophon)

Most listeners encounter "Peter and the Wolf" at an age too young to discern what makes it so remarkable: not the pastoral charm, but the astonishing economy with which Prokofiev transforms orchestral color into characters. An oboe becomes a duck, a clarinet a cat, a bassoon a grandfather, three horns the wolf. The result is a master class in how timbre becomes the story.

This live recording, narrated by Viola Davis at the Hollywood Bowl, emerges as a souvenir of Dudamel's tenure as music and artistic director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, which ends in August. Under his baton, every instrument acquires an inner life and an uncommon depth, enriching the score's familiar warmth with cooler, moodier shades. And yet it is Davis who binds these disparate colors into a coherent drama. She recites with the gravity of someone who understands that fairy tales are never entirely for children, without condescension, enabling the music to do what Prokofiev intended: assign personality to sounds — bright, exact and capable of expressing more than words. It'll make you feel like a child again. *ARYA ROSHANIAN*





United by a Sense of Home, Then and Now

‘North Star’ blends speeches by Frederick Douglass with a series of moving performances.

By TIM TEEMAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RACHEL PAPO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

“North Star,” produced in association with the Lyric Theater Belfast, premiered in that city in 2024. The show begins with a Douglass quote — “Wherever else I feel myself to be a stranger, I will remember I have a home in Belfast” — spoken by the disembodied voice of the actor Colin Salmon playing Douglass. His words are interspersed with a rousing live soundtrack of hip-hop, rap, funk and gospel, led by Kaidi Tatham, and the poems of young people from Belfast (here on video) and New York (in person).

“I’m rewriting the history, trying to shed the skin of all the layers that were missed by me,” writes Jaleel Brown Howard, a 15-year-old 10th grader, about moving from Georgia to New York. Joseph Pucci, also 15, writes a witty paean to his uncle Phillix, “the first person in our family to go to college, and who set me on that path too,” he said.

Shola Jinadu, 10, sings her poem, “Why New York Feels Like Home,” later saying of its genesis, “This place *is* home. I would rather be here some of the time than any place in the world.”

“North Star,” directed by the British D.J. Kwame Daniels, is at the Irish Arts Center in Manhattan through June 21. Among the performers are (top, from left) the rapper OneDa, the poet Nandi Jola and the singer-songwriter Winnie Ama.

The young performers share the stage with a choir and band. Positioned among the audience members roaming around the space are three podiums, where the poet Nandi Jola, the singer-songwriter Winnie Ama and the rapper OneDa, whose songs are written by Leo Miyagee, perform. (There are seats for audience members who require them.)

“The show is immersive because I want to literally bring people closer to Black culture and Black people, spatially and on the same level, to encourage empathy and compassion,” Daniels said.

For Aidan Connolly, the executive director of the Irish Arts Center, the show “feels like a ritual, a coming together.”

Tatham said, “I can’t imagine what Frederick Douglass went through. I so respect what he did.” One of OneDa’s raps goes, “Shall I pack my bags and run away? Should I hedge my bets and stay?” A British lesbian born to Nigerian parents, OneDa said the show “represents Black struggle and resilience and the importance of allies, as the Irish were to Frederick Douglass.”

For Daniels, a 51-year-old Londoner of Ghanaian heritage who moved to Belfast in 1997, the themes of “North Star” were sharpened when anti-immigration riots broke out in Belfast and other towns and cities in the United Kingdom during the summer of 2024, mere months before the show’s premiere. (A new wave of riots erupted on Tuesday after a man was stabbed in Belfast.)

The riots “shattered,” Daniels said, his “sense of home” as a Black person living in Belfast. And yet, he added, many thousands of people marched against anti-immigrant sentiment, mirroring the city’s citizens in the 19th century who mobilized to ensure ships carrying enslaved people never launched from Belfast’s port. Douglass would eventually write three autobiographies detailing his experiences and beliefs. He died in 1895, at the age of about 77. A bronze statue of Douglass was unveiled in Belfast in 2023.

Before “North Star,” in 2020, Daniels founded Solab, a digital platform for artists across Africa and the African diaspora, in response to the murder of George Floyd. Performing “North Star” is especially pertinent now, he said, “while there are so many forces dividing and tearing us apart, and when people feel more emboldened to be openly racist. Also, young people’s voices are often overlooked. I’m glad this show gives them the space to express themselves.”

Another of those young performers, Ashly Fernandez Nuñez, 16, was inspired by “Hamilton.” Her passionately recited poem evokes the highs and lows of living in New York. “The point of life is to push through tough situations to be your better self,” she said. “Expressing that in art can make it into something beautiful.”

A.I. Helps a $100 Thrift-Store Painting Sell for Over $250,000

Curious about the origins of his mother’s find, a man turns to a chatbot for clues.

By MALIA MENDEZ

Sixty years ago, Helene Plotkin was perusing a thrift store in White Plains, N.Y., when a painting nestled among several others caught her eye.

Plotkin, who has an undergraduate degree in art, found herself mesmerized by the artwork’s bursts of color and its bold brushwork, which evoked the Fauvist style she loved. In the painting, a woman dressed in black sits in a domestic setting dashed with bright blue and orange hues. Plotkin remembers paying less than $100 for it.

The painting hung on Plotkin’s wall until last December, when, with the help of artificial intelligence, she discovered that her decades-ago thrift find was, in fact, a relic of European art history.

Later verified by art appraisers as an original work by the acclaimed Scottish Colorist F.C.B. Cadell, Plotkin’s painting sold to a private buyer at auction this month for 189,200 pounds with fees, or roughly $254,000.

Stories of family heirlooms that turn out to be worth fortunes have long been fodder for television shows like “Antiques Roadshow” and “Pawn Stars.” Yet Plotkin’s path to profit suggests that A.I. may be able to provide the rank-and-file with the kind of object-identification services historically limited to the expertly trained human eye.

Plotkin, 88, had long sensed a “regal feeling” in Cadell’s portrait, imagining its subject as, say, a politician’s wife (the woman has always reminded Plotkin of Eleanor Roosevelt). But she never suspected that she owned a masterpiece worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

“I never, never thought about it at all,” Plotkin said in a recent telephone interview, “other than I loved the painting.”

Plotkin’s son Barry, 60, recalled that throughout the years, even as his mother occasionally speculated about the artwork’s origins, her curiosity never went beyond passing remarks, nor did he feel the painting warranted an investigation. It would have been a hassle to transport it to an auction house, just to be turned away.

Then a few months ago, a thought struck Barry during a visit to his mother’s home in Florida: Why not try Gemini, Google’s A.I. assistant? He snapped a photo, uploaded it and asked the chatbot what it could tell him about the painting.

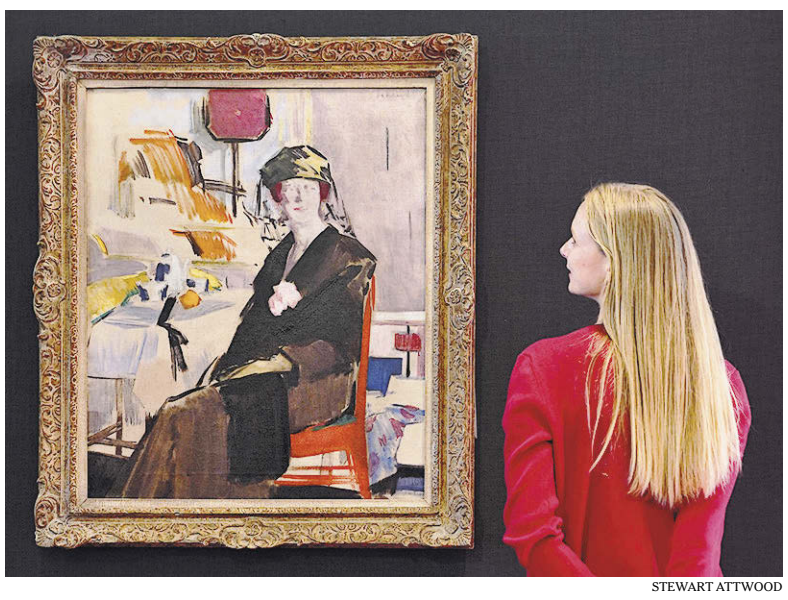
“It was amazing how much information came out of that,” he said.

In some of Gemini’s early responses, it noted the painting’s orange accents, its Art Deco aesthetics and its lilac backdrop — all “unmistakably” characteristics of Cadell’s work. It also cited the painter’s affiliation with the Scottish Colorists, a group of four artists — Cadell, John Duncan Fergusson, George Leslie Hunter and Samuel John Peploe — who infused modern British art with Fauvist and French Impressionist flavors.

“Your mother didn’t just find a ‘Cadell,’” Gemini wrote, “she found a large-scale, 1920s studio portrait of his primary muse, painted in his most famous Edinburgh studio.”

On top of delivering that great news, Gemini directed Barry to consult the back of the painting. There, he and his mother found an auction marking, a canvas stamp and a processing date. Gemini recommended “next steps for verification,” including contacting an auction house and a professional art appraiser. The A.I. assistant suggested the specialists Nick Curnow and Alice Strang at Lyon & Turnbull.

“As the story unraveled, we just got more and more excited,” Strang said in an interview, “because this is the stuff of auctioneers’ dreams.”



STEWART ATTWOOD

HELENE PLOTKIN

Helene Plotkin, far right, with what turned out to be an original work by the Scottish Colorist F.C.B. Cadell that she bought 60 years ago at a thrift store for less than $100. Titled “Interior: The Lady in Black” by art specialists at Lyon & Turnbull, it was sold to a private buyer this month at auction for roughly $254,000 with fees.

Strang and Curnow confirmed much of what A.I. had maintained, with a key exception: Gemini had identified Cadell’s subject as Bethia Hamilton Don Wauchope, a frequent model of Cadell’s whose name is inscribed on the back of the work. But Lyon & Turnbull pinpointed the model as May Easter, another of the painter’s models. The turban that Easter wears in Plotkin’s painting she also wears in Cadell’s “Pink and Gold.” Both paintings were most likely made in the mid-1920s, Strang said.

Additional research and technical analysis — including inspection under three kinds of light — further confirmed Gemini’s findings.

Cadell was “an absolute master of the paintbrush,” Strang said, adding, “He says ‘I am Cadell’ over and over in these paintings.”

Strang said she could not explain how Cadell’s painting wound up in suburban New York in 1966, mere months after Christie’s in London had sold it for £21 (or some $600 today). Mirroring Cadell’s naming style, she and Curnow titled the painting “Interior: The Lady in Black.”

Strang could have attributed the painting to Cadell on its own, she said, though she acknowledged that without A.I.’s assistance, Plotkin’s son might never have come to the firm.

As for the hefty payout, Plotkin, who has taught art and been known to give away her own paintings, said she planned to let her sons have it. “I don’t want any,” she said. “It’s theirs.”

Her one hope is that the artwork’s buyer might occasionally display it publicly.

She imagined her grandchildren might come across it and say, “Oh, look, there’s Nana’s painting.”

Movies

ROBERT DANIELS | FILM REVIEW

NORACHAI KAJCHAPANONT/LIONSGATE

On a Mission, and Taking a Licking

Martial arts stars from across Asia fill a thriller that recalls the heights of 1990s Hong Kong action cinema.

WHILE WATCHING THE eloquently composed fights that power "The Furious" forward, a bliss arises that often comes when honed professionals ply their trade with exacting force. The action star Xie Miao plays Wang Wei, a mute single father searching for his recently kidnapped daughter, Rainy (Yang Enyou). He teams with Navin (Joe Taslim), a journalist investigating his own wife's disappearance. Scattered clues lead them to a child trafficking ring run by the wealthy racketeer Paklung (Joey Iwanaga). Xie and Taslim's intricate physical artistry recalls the heights of 1990s Hong Kong action cinema.

"The Furious" is a rousing piece of spectacle. Directed with a sure hand by Kenji Tanigaki, it delivers the kind of pristine set pieces, invigorating camerawork and seamless editing that made "Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In," on which Tanigaki served as the action designer, a beautifully choreographed picture built on body-breaking blows.

Tanigaki doesn't want to reinvent the proverbial wheel. He aims to perfect it. This refined film leans on the genre's familiar themes and common tropes, like children in peril and spouses seeking revenge on behalf of a slain loved one. It also takes place, as the title card explains, "somewhere in Southeast Asia," which allows the members of an esteemed ensemble hailing from across the continent to combine their martial arts styles to form a unique blend of regionalist combat.

CRITIC'S PICK

The Furious
Rated R for strong bloody violence and language. In Chinese, Thai and English, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 53 minutes. In theaters.

Xie and Taslim shoulder the imaginative desires of Tanigaki and his action choreographer, Kensuke Sonomura, even while the broad screenplay pulls its interest away from them. The two carve their characters' inner lives through the tenacious athleticism they bring to every scene.

This duo is backed by a cadre of genre legends. In the opening, for instance, Navin's wife attempts to free an imprisoned child from the clutches of traffickers when the Indonesian actor Yayan Ruhian (the "Raid" films), playing Tak, ends her pursuit with the quickness of an arrow. Later, Wei and Navin track the henchmen to an ice factory where a hulking Brian Le, portraying the dimwitted Ho, moves with astounding speed, dipping and darting around swinging kicks and lunging punches. Tanigaki and his cinematographer, Meteor Cheung, employ wide panoramas intermingled with tight pans that never lose focus on the choreography's center point.

Tanigaki's aesthetic approach highlights physical realism and visual clarity rather than glossy fakery. Set pieces like the ice factory and the climactic raid on a police station, which features kaleidoscopic choreography that pits Wei and Navin against Paklung, Tak and Ho, require long takes that test the bodily endurance of these actors and the film's crew. The material sacrifice on display in "The Furious" is not only noticeable, but also awe-inspiring.

Above, Xie Miao, center, and Joe Taslim, right, have each other's backs in "The Furious."

GLENN KENNY
FILM REVIEW

Jubilant, Infectious & Funky

A look at a band and its leader through the eyes of a fellow musician.

JAMES BROWN used to call himself "the hardest working man in show business." As he left us almost two decades ago, I trust it's not sacrilegious to suggest the sobriquet be passed to Ahmir Thompson, better known as Questlove, a musician, producer, author and filmmaker (as in the incredible "Summer of Soul" from 2021). His new documentary, "Earth, Wind & Fire: To Be Celestial vs. That's the Weight of the World," is an astonishing movie that fully lives up to its deliberately unwieldy title.

It does so largely in its portrait of Maurice White, the visionary and mercurial founder of the band, which began as an intense jazz ensemble in Chicago before morphing into a soul and funk hit-making outfit. Thompson uses archival footage, contemporary interviews, and better-than-decent animation to construct a story that's as much about White's legacy — one that's crucial to Thompson the musician — as it is about White himself. The Questlove-White connection helps the movie go deeper than a portrait by a nonmusician might have.

CRITIC'S PICK

Earth, Wind & Fire: To Be Celestial vs. That's the Weight of the World
Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 59 minutes. Watch on HBO Max.

The infectiousness of Earth, Wind & Fire's music — from the sinuous smoothness of "That's the Way of the World" to the muscular funk of "Shining Star" and beyond — makes the case for White's genius. And the movie depicts the artist's aspirations to raise consciousness as sincere. But Thompson is cleareyed about White's various shortcomings: his philandering, his undervaluing and outright withholding from his bandmates (who at one point included two of his own brothers), and more. But with the help of not just the music but the interviewees — Thompson's pull is such that the first talking head onscreen is former President Barack Obama — the movie is ultimately an extremely apt celebration.

HBO

Maurice White in Questlove's documentary about Earth, Wind & Fire.

ALISSA WILKINSON | FILM REVIEW

Erasing Grief and Some Thorny Questions

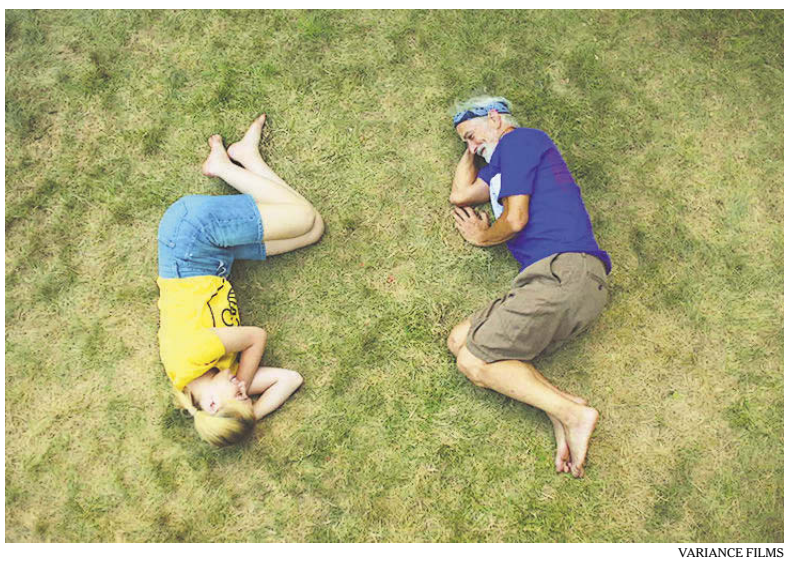
A.I. is recruited to mimic dead loved ones, but that's not even the biggest ethical issue here.

SOMETIMES IT'S CLEAR why a bad movie didn't work: half-baked premise, poorly cast actors, janky editing, insufficient budget. Sometimes it's less clear what happened. "O Horizon" is the second kind of bad movie, with a bonus element: Its existence gets more baffling as you realize what it really is.

The basic idea of the film is intriguing if, at this point, not all that original. Abby (Maria Bakalova) is a neuroscientist who works for Sandra Williams (Alysia Reiner), a researcher whose work is so groundbreaking that she's been shortlisted for the Nobel Prize. They're mapping a monkey's brain, trying to figure out how to create the sensation of a pleasurable experience in the monkey — eating a raspberry, for instance — without that experience actually taking place. If they can pull it off, presumably, they'll be able to help humans do things like experience joy or overcome feelings of hunger or grief.

Abby has a vested interest in this, because she has recently lost her father, Warren (David Strathairn), to whom she was very close. Seeking comfort, she goes to the Seeking a Friend Store, a weird little joint run by a computer programmer named Sam (Adam Pally). Sam has figured out how to take images, videos and other mementos of a person — a celebrity, perhaps, or a dead loved one — and turn them into a facsimile of that person for his customer to chat with. He does so for Abby, who now can "chat" with Warren on the phone.

It's sort of a Black Mirror premise, except things do not go in a Black Mirror direction. Instead, it's more of a fable, with Abby learning about grief and letting go and also love and life and all of that.



VARIANCE FILMS

Maria Bakalova, above right and above with David Strathairn, in a film that has parallels with the life of its director, whose family company made OxyContin.

But there's a lot about the film that just feels off somehow. Lines are delivered by almost all of the actors — including Strathairn, surely one of the best actors of his generation — as if they're in a not terribly well-directed community theater production, with awkward breaks and pauses.

While the film tries to explain the discrepancy between Bakalova's Bulgarian accent and her father's American one with a back story about the family having lived in Europe until she was a teenager, she handles a lot of the lines with an uncertain cadence, which makes that rationale seem unlikely. It's a shame, since her emotional performance seems genuine, and she was a delight in "Borat Subsequent Moviefilm" and has turned in solid work in other films, like "Bodies Bodies Bodies" and "The Apprentice."

Other elements of the film can be either distracting or seemingly underdeveloped. For instance, the world of the Seeking a Friend Store, full of posters of slightly altered movies — "Live Hard," "A Beautiful Friend," "Back in the Future" — seems intriguing but largely disappears early on. And at one point, the singer Aimee Mann, playing a version of herself, appears as the owner of the cabin in the woods to which Abby has retreated for a breather.

For all of these reasons, while I was watching "O Horizon," I assumed it was just a first-time effort by a new filmmaker who needed some experience. I was surprised to discover that the writer and director, Madeleine Rotzler, is an experienced filmmaker who had previously worked under her maiden name, Sackler. Her first film was shortlisted for an Oscar, and two others have been nominated for Emmys, with one win. While those awards were for documentaries, this is her second narrative film.

VARIANCE FILMS

O Horizon
Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 47 minutes. In theaters.

Though her documentaries have been about social issues like mass incarceration, she's been criticized for brushing off questions about her family's wealth, which comes from the opioid painkiller OxyContin, considered by critics to be the foundation of the opioid crisis.

This is mostly odd given the plot of the film. Reportedly, some members of the crew objected to the story during production, pointing out parallels to Sackler's own life and her relationship with her recently deceased father, Jonathan Sackler, saying she was whitewashing his reputation. She denied those parallels. Regardless, Abby's grief over Warren's death is an idea that has appeared across a number of movies, given the ability of artificial intelligence to mimic dead loved ones.

But more strange is the idea of Abby's research, the ethics of which the film touches on lightly but does not interrogate thoroughly. "O Horizon" concludes that experiencing grief is important and probably good, and that the monkey on which they've been experimenting is exhausted.

Yet near the end of the film, a voice of wisdom says to Abby that "it's impossible to know what the net impact of penicillin will have been at the end of time" — a very odd statement, and one that might raise an eyebrow given the broader context of the film. The movie never really suggests that removing pain from human experience would be a bad thing. Apparently, it's just that the methodology is off. At its very best, that's a bit of magical thinking.

CHRIS AZZOPARDI | FILM REVIEW

Gleefully Unhinged on the Express to Absurdity

Drag queens comically confront a transit crisis as a dangerous storm approaches.

WORLD OF WONDER/BLEECKER STREET

RuPaul plays the president, and Matt Rogers is the president's press secretary, in "Stop! That! Train!"

THE CATEGORY is Pride Month in "Stop! That! Train!" And there's a hot mess on the horizon as passengers on the Glamazonian Express are forced to dodge the divine retribution manifested in "stormaganza," a giant storm that is quickly approaching this high-speed train. The movie's "based on a true story" tagline doesn't feel quite like the joke it sets out to be: being a passenger on a ride, run by idiots, that persists in trying to ruin us? Yeah, we're all on *that* train.

So you can't blame the bosom-bumping buddies Tess and DeeDee (the drag queens Ginger Minj and Jujubee, stars of "RuPaul's Drag Race" and born for the roles) for desperately wanting jobs on the luxury rail line where they become stewards after Stank Rail shuts down. Barbed exchanges between the new girls and the established Glamazonian crew of Alli (Marcia Marcia Marcia), Amber (Brooke Lynn Hytes) and Ayshleiygh (Symone) sting more than a little, but they're no match for the crisis ahead.

CRITIC'S PICK

Stop! That! Train!
Rated R for sexual innuendo and violent doors. Running time: 1 hour 32 minutes. In theaters.

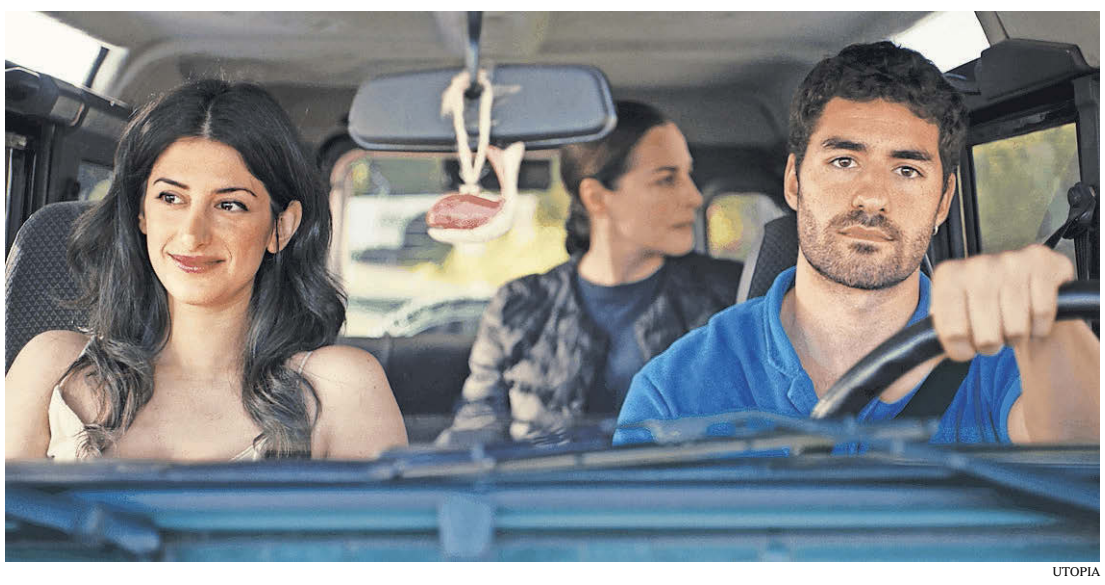
What they need is a leader they can count on. What they get is President Judy Gagwell. No one even needs to utter the word "Trump" for him to be present in RuPaul's coded, spectacle-scale performance of a president in name only, especially when tragedy strikes. President Gagwell is a figure marked by past controversy and grave incompetence, brought to the surface through recurring "hot flashbacks."

Matt Rogers, her media-scolding press secretary, performs some terrific drag himself without dressing like Karoline Leavitt. There's even a tough employment climate, as Latrice Royale's Barbra knows, appearing in a new job in each scene as if by magic. It's one of the greatest recurring punch lines in modern comedy. And Donna Dusk, the command center worker, is played by Rachel Bloom with the sort of seriousness that makes every stupid thing happening around her even funnier.

The comedy-cloaked defiance happening here turns the wrath of God on its head. If "stormaganza" is supposedly heavenly retribution, this movie's response is to hand the rescue mission to drag queens and then dare you not to root for them. The cleverly absurd script by Christina Friel and Connor Wright does the film lots of favors, with the jokes arriving quicker than the gals get Glamazonian-ready in a public bathroom. With the same kind of sweetness and heightened stylization that he brought to "Hairspray," the director Adam Shankman balances jokes for an in-crowd with the pleasures of spoofs like "Airplane!" and "Barb and Star Go to Vista Del Mar," plus the appeal of seeing Joel McHale in a harness (one of the better star cameos, which also include Sarah Michelle Gellar and Charo).

"Tell it to us straight; tell it to us gay," various characters say throughout the film when danger arises. It's an astutely funny bit about today's media era, how each of us consumes a different algorithmically curated version of our own fraught world. "Stop! That! Train!" tells it to you in the most thoroughly, brazenly and exuberantly gay way, as though to say, this is the train many of us will want to be riding if it must go off the rails.

FILM REVIEWS



UTOPIA

From left, Ayden Mayeri, Amira Casar and José Condessa in "Honeyjoon," set at a resort in the Azores.

Honeyjoon

Not rated. In English, Portuguese and Persian, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 15 minutes. In theaters.

For the 20-something June (Ayden Mayeri), the protagonist of the strange, sensual dramedy "Honeyjoon," a vacation resort in the Azores means itty-bitty bikinis and scoping out the local bachelors. Too bad her wingwoman is her mother, Lela (Amira Casar), a Persian-British couples therapist still hurting from the death of her husband, June's father, from cancer. The duo have come to paradise to commemorate the anniversary of his passing, but each woman has different expectations for what that means. This friction — among others — plays out amid an ambient melancholy and a dry, occasionally frisky, sense of humor.

Tragicomedy strikes early on when the women realize they're surrounded by honeymooners, twisting a knife in the side of Lela's loss. To avoid the newlyweds, June books a private tour manned by João (José Condessa), a steely stud who seems immune to June's attempts at seduction and much more charmed by her mother.

The script, by the writer-director Lilian T. Mehrel, is a bit heavy-handed in the way it plots out the women's differences: Lela, the epitome of someone aged like fine wine, is profound and perceptive, though her social media "activism" — she obsessively tracks the online activities of a women's rights group in Iran — is lightly mocked and set against June's thirst-trap agenda, a sort of feminism in and of itself. June, an American millennial who never bothered to learn Persian (though she claims some knowledge when João shows interest), prefers keeping things fun and fluffy — the easier to relax, she tells her buzzkill of a mom.

Lela's grief, in any case, isn't explosive; it hangs over the film like the island's profusion of purgatory-evoking fog. The cinematographer Inés Gowland's soft, painterly compositions, too, temper the film's emotions; because June is big on selfies, a handful of sightseeing scenes are captured from the playful perspective of an iPhone video, releasing some of the pressure of the film's more somber visuals. These delicate mood-shifts are the film's strength, sanding over (to an extent) the clunkiness of its themes to achieve a special balance: "Honeyjoon" is both a mourning movie, and a horny one.

BEATRICE LOAYZA

NETFLIX

"I Am Frankelda," written and directed by Arturo and Roy Ambriz.

I Am Frankelda

Not rated. In Spanish, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 54 minutes. On Netflix.

Mary Shelley's literary fecundity meets the musical stop-motion of "The Nightmare Before Christmas," the intricacy of Gustave Doré's "Divine Comedy" engravings and Guillermo del Toro's gothic fantasy in "I Am Frankelda." While del Toro advised this stop-motion production, it was written and directed by the brothers Arturo and Roy Ambriz in their debut feature. If there is something of a passing (or sharing) of the torch here, the dark flame of Mexican fantasy is alive and well with los hermanos Ambriz.

A prequel to the short series "Frankelda's Book of Spooks," this is an origin story of sorts: Who is the mysterious (literal) ghostwriter Frankelda (voiced by Mireya Mendoza), anyway? How did she *become* Frankelda, born Francisca Imelda, an aspiring horror writer from late 19th-century Mexico? And who was Herneval (Arturo Mercado Jr.) before he became her ornery enchanted book?

He was, as it turns out, the prince of nightmares, el príncipe de los sustos (also the title of the movie's catchiest song). Herneval's family reigns over the troubled Topus Terrenus, a land of nightmares straight out of Frankelda's beloved horror stories. Her fiction is real, at least in all of the ways that matter.

This underlying story line — fiction as a way to understand reality — grounds the film when flights of fancy (and perhaps too much Topus Terrenus lore) threaten to carry it away. "I Am Frankelda" can feel overstuffed with plotlines at times, but like a plastic jack-o'-lantern bucket overflowing with candy: bright, beautiful, spooky — and ultimately, a treat.

LAURA ZORNOSA

Promised Sky

Not rated. In French and Arabic, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 32 minutes. In theaters.

The movie "Promised Sky" begins with three women bathing a young girl, Kenza (Estelle Kenza Dogbo). From the questions they ask — about the name of her school, about the boat she was in that flipped over — it becomes clear that none of the adults is her mother. Rather, Kenza is a migrant in Tunisia and the three of them have recently taken her into the home they share in Tunis, instead of turning her over to the authorities. Each woman has come from sub-Saharan Africa and lives in a state of uncertainty herself.

Naney (Debora Lobe Naney) has been in the country for three years and had hoped to scrape together enough money for her teenage daughter to join her from the Ivory Coast; lacking a formal job, she engages in various small-time schemes with her friend Foued (Foued Zaazaa). Marie (Aïssa Maïga), who once worked as journalist, has become the pastor of an evangelical church; she harbors money from immigrant parishioners who cannot open bank accounts. Ostensibly the best situated is Jolie (Laetitia Ky), who has papers to study in Tunisia to become an engineer. But she struggles with classes that are often taught in Arabic, not French. Her father, who sends Marie money for Jolie from afar, is justifiably concerned that the police are indiscriminate about roundups.

The French-Tunisian director Erige Sehiri dramatizes these events without inflection or handholding; the screenplay (by Sehiri, Anna Ciennik and Malika Cécile Louati) is restrained in explaining the social context. "Promised Sky" clearly draws on some documentary elements (for instance, Sehiri met the nonprofessional actress who plays Naney in the course of her research). There is much to be said for her unsensationalistic approach, and for its specificity of detail, even if splitting the narrative three ways means that each of these stories feels shortchanged.

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MANOHLA DARGIS | FILM REVIEW

Spielberg in His Maximalist Element

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

best recent material. Spielberg conceived of the story for this movie, which effectively plays out as a feature-length chase involving some likable, enigmatically connected people who are racing toward a shared destiny while evading powerful forces. As the race goes on, the movie veers between comedy and suspense, action and contemplation, the sounds of squealing tires mixing with sober interludes that touch on belief, reason, trauma, self-governance, the common good and higher powers.

The movie opens mid-chase with a skittish Spielbergian Everyman, Daniel Kellner (Josh O'Connor), fending off a phalanx of Spielbergian heavies led by Noah Scanlon (Colin Firth), a smooth talker with a plummy accent and a raptor's gaze. It's night in the generic big city, and Daniel has a frightened woman at his side, Jane Blankenship (Eve Hewson), and a small mysterious object in hand that Noah wants. Daniel also has skills, and with some fast moves and nimble footwork he and Jane manage to evade capture in an S.U.V. It's one of the first in a series of amusingly preposterous escapes that Spielberg orchestrates, and is in keeping with the perilous getaways that filmmakers have been perfecting since early cinema.

Soon after Daniel and Jane peel off, other characters emerge in quick succession in what becomes a prickly intrigue. Something very big, potentially explosive and obviously dangerous is underway here, which helps feed the deepening mystery and mounting unease. In one corner of the world, there's Hugo Wakefield (Colman Domingo), a paternal figure who's in what at first looks like an interior construction site, where he's surrounded by scurrying workers and false walls. He tethers one of a handful of story lines that eventually join together and routinely delivers guidance to Daniel. Hugo also embodies values that seem in direct opposition to Noah's and which introduce the story's larger Manichaean divide.

As promised, there are extraterrestrials, too, though they largely hover in the background rather than taking center stage as E.T. does. Spielberg and Koepp tease the aliens here early on in dramatic, somber fashion, incorporating them into a progressively complex conspiratorial web. The greater, more surprising jolt, though, is how funny the movie is. That's particularly true of the scenes with Emily Blunt, as Margaret Fairchild, a Kansas City, Mo., TV weather presenter who — in what seems like one of the movie's many autobiographical allusions — yearns to be taken more seriously. Blunt's Margaret is a fast talker and mover, a human cyclone whose rhythms dovetail with the accelerated pacing.

To a degree, the genesis of "Disclosure Day" can be traced to Spielberg's stargazing when he was growing up in Arizona; it's no wonder the movie feels personal, especially when compared with the bloodlessness of his version of "War of the Worlds." By the time he was a teenager that pastime had fused with his love of movies, and he had made "Firelight" (1964), a feature-length film about scientists investigating alien abductions. In the decades since, he has directed genre standards that, even when they go light on science, often take far-out flight. Many also thrum with the same moral questions that he's engaged elsewhere, notably what responsibility people owe others, whether human, machine or alien.

UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT

Above, Emily Blunt and Josh O'Connor in "Disclosure Day," which plays out as a feature-length chase involving some likable, enigmatically connected people. Below, Colman Domingo, whose character represents a father figure.

NIKO TAVERNISE/UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND AMBLIN ENTERTAINMENT

However deeply Spielberg cares about some of the subjects that he lights on here — and I think that he *does* take them seriously — the movie never gets bogged down by them. At times, it also plays like a greatest-hits compilation. Like his film-struck compatriots in the 1970s, Spielberg has long filled his work with allusions to screen favorites. The misterioso monument that looms in "Close Encounters," for one, evokes Monument Valley, John Ford's stomping ground, and "A.I." is richly embellished with references to the Disney animated film "Pinocchio." A bridge figure between New Hollywood and its corporate successors, Spielberg himself has now loomed large over American cinema for over half a century.

Disclosure Day
CRITIC'S PICK
Rated PG-13. Running time: 2 hours 25 minutes. In theaters.

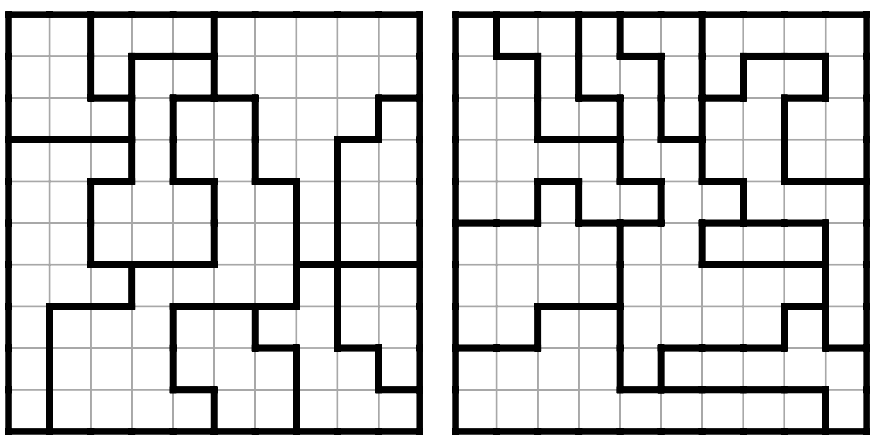
A number of the more memorable allusions in "Disclosure Day," by contrast, are references to Spielberg's own filmography, including both early successes ("Duel") and later ones ("Minority Report"). Wyatt Russell, for instance, who plays Margaret's boyfriend, Jackson, is the son of Goldie Hawn, a star of Spielberg's "The Sugarland Express." It's unclear whether Jackson's guitar is a nod to a motif in "Amblin'," another of the director's early efforts; I like to think that the gold and purple that Margaret wears at one point is an ode to the Los Angeles Lakers from Spielberg's longtime hometown. These self-referential moments are pleasurable, and evoke the freewheeling spiritedness of the likes of the Marx Brothers and Bugs Bunny. It's commonplace for contemporary movies to be filled with such winks, if only for fan service.

Spielberg isn't so much resting on his laurels in "Disclosure Day" as flaunting them, which is entirely understandable; he's earned the right. I also think that with every reference to his earlier work he's making a de facto argument about movies, their past, present and possible future. He was in his mid-20s when he directed "Duel," a television movie that he made while under contract with Universal Studios, and that helped lay the foundation for a career that benefited him, the industry and the audience. It's the kind of trajectory that, as the larger studios have declined, now seems near-impossible. That Firth's villain is an arrogant corporate overlord with withering contempt for other human beings seems instructive.

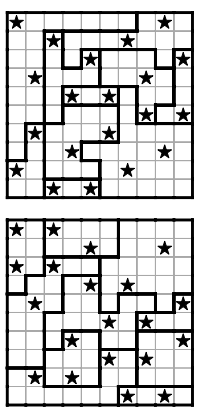
Spielberg and his very fine lead players — O'Connor's yielding softness works contrapuntally with Blunt's crispness — keep the individual parts moving smoothly, even during some lurching transitions. He seems particularly revved up during the action sequences, which have an appealing looseness to them; some of the wilder, more improbable choreographed mayhem is more likely to make you laugh in appreciation than gasp. Spielberg isn't straining to wow you. He reached the summit a while ago, which gives you latitude to get in his groove and have a good time. As I said, he has something to say about the world and our place in it, and while you might dismiss his ideas and sincerity, there's no dismissing his filmmaking.

One of the striking things about Spielberg's interest in science fiction is how closely the genre emblematizes cinema itself in its expansiveness, its relationship to the real world, its capacity for awe and potential idealism. "What did you expect to find," someone asks Richard Dreyfuss's character in "Close Encounters" shortly before its big finish. "An answer!" he all but yells. Having seen some mysterious flying objects, his character has become obsessed with finding out what they are, a search that ends with his leaving his family on a cosmic trip. Here, by contrast, Spielberg has created a de facto family — Domingo makes an excellent Dad — in a movie that insists that cinema itself is an empathy machine that we can all hop aboard.

Two Not Touch



ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES



Put two stars in each row, column and region of the grid. No two stars may touch, not even diagonally.

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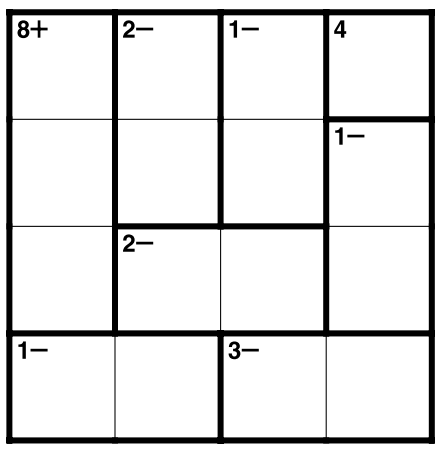
Brain Tickler

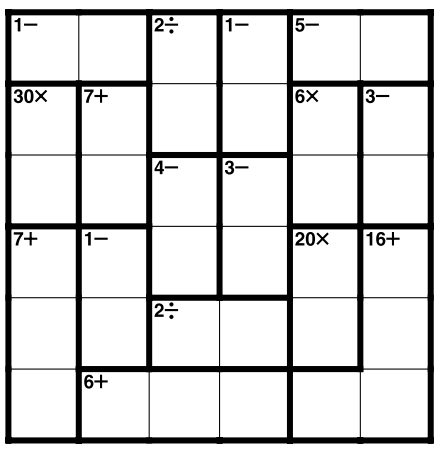
Think of three six-letter words starting with B, F and L, each with two syllables. They all end in the same five letters — but none of the words rhyme. What are they?

PUZZLE BY WILL SHORTZ

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER Long before being elected president, James Madison was Princeton's first graduate student.

KenKen





ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES

3	2	1	4
1	4	2	3
4	1	3	2
2	3	4	1

6	2	5	1	3	4
2	5	3	6	4	1
5	1	2	4	6	3
3	6	4	2	1	5
4	3	1	5	2	6
1	4	6	3	5	2

Fill the grid with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 4x4 grid will use the digits 1-4. A 6x6 grid will use 1-6.

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Crossword | Edited by Will Shortz

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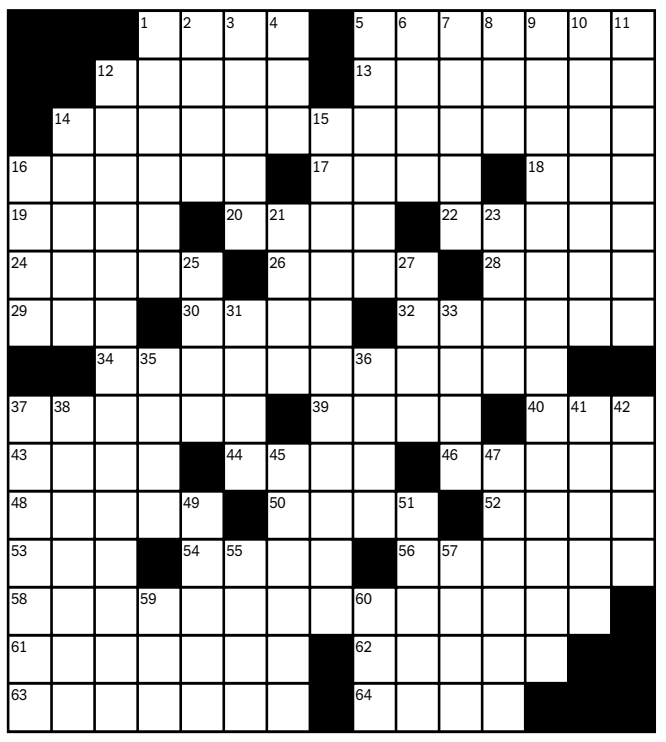

6/12/26

ACROSS

1 Get-up
5 Exhibiting a green face, stereotypically
12 Children's book title character in a green suit
13 Ambassador's aide
14 Inheritance source, for good or ill
16 "Red, the color of ___ / Black, the color of despair" ("Les Misérables" lyric)
17 Prefix with present
18 Farm grazer
19 "Empire of the ___" (1977 sci-fi film with an approval rating of 5% on Rotten Tomatoes)
20 Velociraptor, e.g., informally
22 ___ asada
24 Followers of the guru Nanak
26 Elate
28 Some fragrant gifts
29 Half ass reply?
30 Microscopic
32 Weight
34 Style with spotty coverage?
37 Good market news
39 Slip material
40 Tally: Abbr.
43 Ex-
44 Big name in cups
46 Contents of a modern flood
48 Lock
50 Some camera moves
52 Commedia dell'___
53 Needing no script
54 Deuce follower
56 "That's good to hear"
58 Home of the world's largest independently owned bookstore (spanning an entire city block)
61 Windflower
62 Play again
63 Cone holders
64 Cost of a hand

DOWN

1 Pastry with Austrian origins, despite its name
2 Cab alternative
3 Passé
4 Sanskrit honorific
5 Certain ladder climber
6 ___ collar
7 Ghost story?
8 Didn't play
9 Place where customers get their licks in?
10 Persistent
11 Home of the Ernest Hemingway House
12 Hidden gem
14 One who might say "You wish!"
15 Site of America's first roller coaster
16 T, in Morse code
21 "___ it?"
23 Locale for 11 Winter Olympics
25 Mix up
27 Tzatziki ingredient
31 Quality establishments?
33 M.C.'s need
35 Baseball trio
36 Symbol of courage
37 Satisfactory
38 Epic beginning
41 Saturn satellite
42 Runners carry it
45 Puts in one's two cents
47 Smith who has won the Triple Crown of Acting
49 Do business?
51 Obstacle for Odysseus
55 ___ Point, Calif.
57 Central point
59 "OMG, stop!"
60 Pray, in Latin

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

H	A	L	F		A	C	M	E	S		O	A	K	S
A	R	A	L		L	O	O	S	E		U	L	N	A
M	E	N	U		T	W	O	C	A	P	T	A	I	N
M	A	S	S	L	E	S	S		F	A	I	N	T	S
			H	A	R			V	O	T	E			
H	U	N	D	R	E	D	L	E	G	S		C	D	C
O	P	E	R	A	G	O	E	R			S	H	O	O
N	O	V	A		O	N	A	I	R		A	L	U	M
K	N	E	W			O	P	T	I	C	L	O	B	E
S	E	R		F	O	R	T	Y	S	H	E	E	T	S
			M	A	R	S			K	A	I			
A	F	R	A	I	D		A	C	I	D	T	R	I	P
F	O	U	R	L	E	A	G	U	E		E	A	S	E
R	O	S	E		A	C	R	E	S		M	R	N	A
O	D	E	S		L	E	A	S	T		S	E	T	S

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Fine Art

Of Climate Change, And Hope

In Nevada, five artist-activists shine a light on the Great Basin Desert and beyond.

By JONATHAN GRIFFIN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BENJAMIN RASMUSSEN, VIA NEVADA MUSEUM OF ART

On the wall above, the artwork of Jack Malotte, a member of the South Fork Band of the Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone, at the Nevada Museum of Art. Also, sculpture and a bowl by Rose B. Simpson, ceramic, jute and grout. Left, an installation view of Jonathon Keats's "Centuries of the Bristlecone," 2025, made in collaboration with the clockmakers Phil Abernethy and Brittany Cox. Left center below, on the wall, Oscar Tuazon's "Water Map (Bahsawa bee, Spring Valley, NV)," 2018; and his sculpture, "Twin Post," 2023, juniper, madrona and cinder block.

Into the Time Horizon
Through Jan. 3 at the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno; 775-329-3333, nevadaart.org.

RENO, NEV. — This city was born in the silver and gold rushes of the mid-19th century. It is now a growing tech hub — and the fastest-warming city in the United States.

About 20 miles east, along Interstate 80 and the Truckee River, lies the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center, known as T.R.I. Its website boasts that it is the "largest industrial park in the world." Though established in the late 1990s, most of its development has taken place in the past decade, since Tesla built its Gigafactory Nevada, which makes lithium-ion batteries and other parts for electric cars, followed by data centers for companies including Google and Switch. Wild horses graze on hillsides while construction vehicles rumble toward guarded, windowless facilities.

The architect Rem Koolhaas has called the area "Silicon Valley's back of house." Across the region, such development continues Nevada's legacy of environmental extraction, with lithium taking over from silver and gold, and data centers drawing on groundwater reserves and the fast-flowing Truckee River for cooling equipment. The awe-inspiring Pyramid Lake lies downstream from the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center, on a reservation governed by the Paiute Tribe, for whom it remains both sacred and ecologically vital. Pollution and falling water levels once pushed the Lahontan cutthroat trout to near extinction, though tribal hatchery efforts have helped revive it.

The Nevada Museum of Art, in Reno, is uniquely placed as a witness to the Great Basin's environmental magnificence and degradation. Founded in 1931 by a group of regional landscape painters and the environmental scientist James E. Church, the museum focuses on land art, Indigenous art and photography of the altered environment.

"Into the Time Horizon," a yearlong multipart exhibition of environmental art organized by the museum's chief curator Apsara DiQuinzio, hones the museum's focus, inviting participants to consider how to confront climate change, especially in the Great Basin Desert. In April, the "Art + Environment Summit" convened artists, performers, writers and advocates.

The show is thematically anchored by Indigenous art by American, Pacific Islander and Australian Aboriginal peoples. It is not, on the whole, an exhibition of activist art. Much of it, from mesmeric paintings by the Aboriginal artist Lily Kelly Napangardi to the landscape photographers Len Jenshel, Richard Misrach or Victoria Sambunaris, is beguilingly attractive.

But several participants from "Into the Time Horizon" — not all even consider themselves artists — stood out for their inventive entanglement with real-world problems, showing hopeful ways in which art and aesthetics can make a difference in the Great Basin and beyond.

Jonathon Keats

Jonathon Keats, an artist, writer and philosopher, has created a clock which, he says, answers the question, "How do we hand time back to nature?"

The 11-foot-tall, dual-pendulum timepiece was made in collaboration with the clockmakers Phil Abernethy and Brittany Cox as a permanent feature in a new extension by Will Bruder. A decade in conception, the piece, "Centuries of the Bristlecone," was commissioned by the museum and unveiled in 2025. It is designed to tick for five millenniums more.

One side of its ornate apparatus tells time as we know it, steadily advancing and set to the average of hundreds of atomic clocks. The other side tells what Keats calls Bristlecone time, based on the incrementally slow growth of Great Basin bristlecone pine.

This species is thought to be the longest-lived complex organism on Earth, with some trees estimated to be about 5,000 years old. A grove grows atop a mountain preserve in eastern Nevada stewarded by the Long Now Foundation, founded by the musician Brian Eno, the scientist Danny Hillis and Stewart Brand, editor of the Whole Earth Catalog.

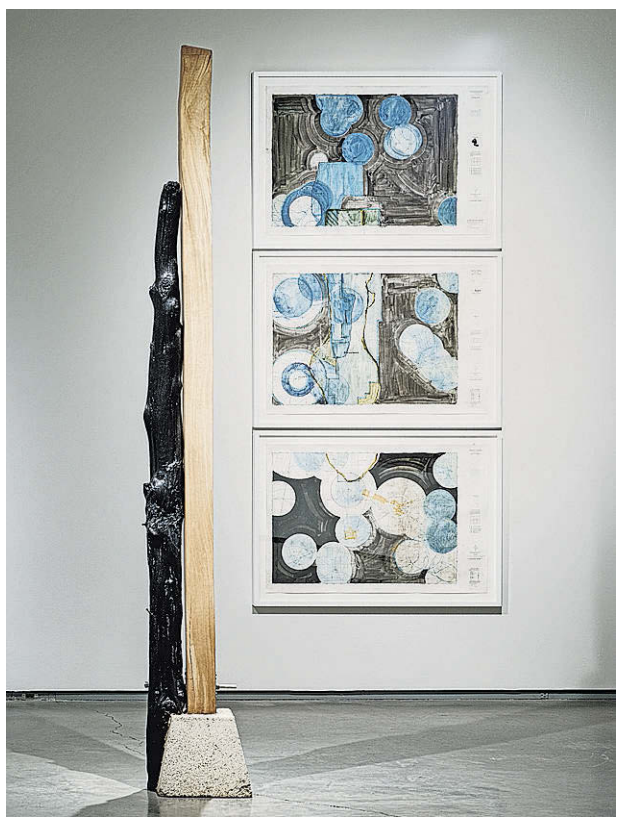
By monitoring the growth of these trees — which is slowed or sped up by climate changes — Keats calibrates his clock to tell time as the pines experience it.

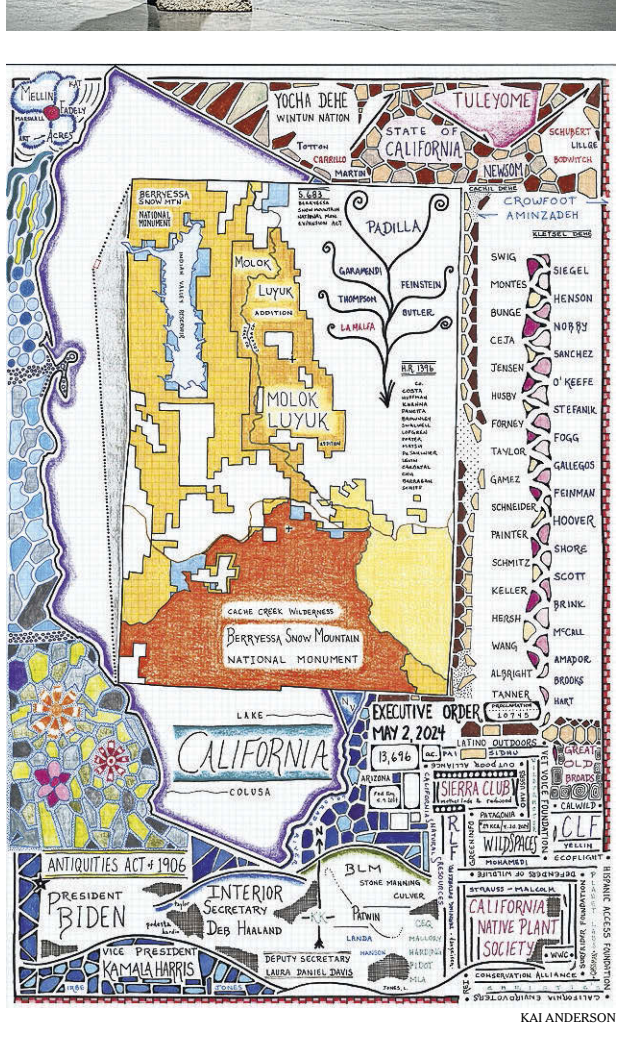
"What I'm trying to do with this project," he said, "is the opposite of what clockmakers have done for hundreds of years, which is to insulate the clock. If the clock is sensitive to all that is happening in the world — much of which is on account of us — it then gives us a means by which to observe the impact of our actions, and to calibrate our future actions accordingly."

Oscar Tuazon

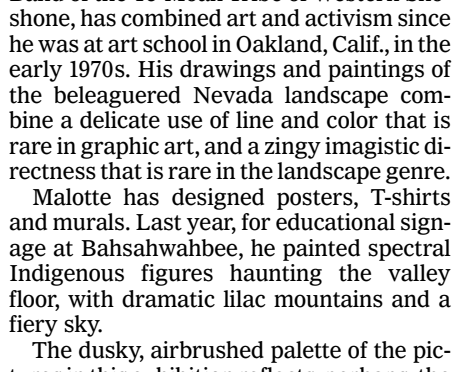
Bahsahwahbee is the Shoshone name for Spring Valley, an area of eastern Nevada where subterranean aquifers support unusually large specimens of Rocky Mountain juniper trees (known locally as swamp cedars), which the Shoshone believe embody the souls of ancestors killed by the Federal Army in the 19th century.

Around 2018, the Los Angeles-based sculptor Oscar Tuazon heard of a conflict between the Shoshone and the Southern Nevada Water Authority, which proposed connecting the aquifers of Spring Valley to Las Vegas, 200 miles south.





KAI ANDERSON



HALEY MELLIN, VIA DITTRICH & SCHLECHTRIEM GALLERY

Haley Mellin's "Cloud Forest II," 2024, gouache, acrylic, charcoal and ink on canvas.

With the assistance of the tribe, he bought a spring north of Bahsahwahbee, fed by the same system of aquifers, with the aim of securing water rights on behalf of the Shoshone. His intention is eventually to return Cedar Spring, as his land is called, to the tribe. After the battle against the pipeline was won, chiefly because of the efforts of Shoshone advocates, Tuazon began conceiving his project in less overtly activist terms. Cedar Spring is becoming a contemporary land art site as he considers how to make it more accessible to visitors.

In "Into the Time Horizon," three maps by Tuazon, painted with ink and watercolor, chart the area's interconnected water sources. Nearby, a stark sculpture — made of a gnarled, carbonized juniper fence post salvaged from the land standing next to a 4-by-4-inch timber that Tuazon shaped himself — is a minimalist metaphor, perhaps, for Cedar Spring's past and its future, or for the landscape and his presence within it.

Haley Mellin

As founder of the nonprofit organization Art Into Acres, Haley Mellin has been instrumental in conserving millions of acres of threatened land from Australia to South America to the United States. The organization's funding model is principally based on the sale of artworks; Carol Bove, Anicka Yi, Jonas Wood and Dana Schutz have all contributed works.

The organization focuses on intact forest landscapes, "areas so wild that they're exceptionally healthy for reproduction and the continuation of evolution of species," Mellin said.

Mellin is a painter, and her small but intense canvas "Cloud Forest II," 2024, shows, in vivid, hyperrealist detail, teeming green growth in an area of the Northern Highlands of Guatemala, one of Art Into Acres' continuing projects.

Slowness is a virtue of both her painting process and her work with Art Into Acres. She estimates that one hour of observational painting corresponds to about 100 hours of work required to protect the land it depicts. Mellin works in gouache; her modest painting equipment fits in a backpack. Usually, she paints as her conservation efforts are nearing completion. "They're not paintings of woe, actually, they're paintings of celebration," she said.

Kai Anderson

The term "pictographs," especially in the Great Basin region, usually refers to ancient drawings found on the walls of caves, often mysterious in significance. The colorful, decorated maps made by Kai Anderson, which he also refers to as pictographs, are necessarily more legible.

A Washington-based policy advocate who once worked as deputy chief of staff for Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, Anderson does not consider himself an artist. Much of his work has been lobbying to designate new national monuments and to protect other wilderness areas, specializing in bringing diverse stakeholders together to solve environmental problems.

"My maps are basically to help me learn the material that I'm working on," he said at the symposium, the first time he had shown his maps publicly.

A drawing Anderson did in colored pencil delineates the complex negotiations around the expansion of the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument in California. Alongside the tessellated outline of Molok Luyuk — the Patwin people's name for Condor Ridge, a 13,696-acre area that was added to the existing national monument — Anderson has added notations listing relevant politicians, Native tribes, interested organizations like the Sierra Club and the California Native Plant Society, and — tucked into a corner — an acknowledgment of Art Into Acres, which was involved in the campaign.

Whether or not we (or Anderson) consider such a drawing to be art, it proves the effectiveness that aesthetics can have in understanding — and sometimes solving — seemingly intractable environmental problems.

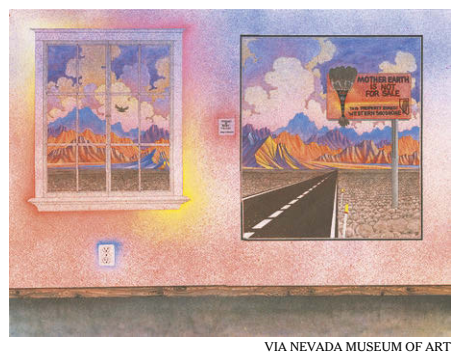
Jack Malotte

Jack Malotte, a member of the South Fork Band of the Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone, has combined art and activism since he was at art school in Oakland, Calif., in the early 1970s. His drawings and paintings of the beleaguered Nevada landscape combine a delicate use of line and color that is rare in graphic art, and a zingy imagistic directness that is rare in the landscape genre.

Malotte has designed posters, T-shirts and murals. Last year, for educational signage at Bahsahwahbee, he painted spectral Indigenous figures haunting the valley floor, with dramatic lilac mountains and a fiery sky.

The dusky, airbrushed palette of the pictures in this exhibition reflects, perhaps, the world-weariness of an artist looking at places and people that are still, after decades of protest and advocacy, fighting for respect.

In hi drawing "Mother Earth I Not for Sale," from 1983, Malotte allegorized the relationship of his activist art to the raw landscape. From inside a house, we look through a window at a magnificent mountain range, a hawk soaring above. Hanging on the wall is a large painting of a similar view, pierced by a road and a billboard warning: "Mother Earth Is Not for Sale" and "This Property Zoned: Western Shoshone." Malotte confronts us with two versions of the same scene: one marred by human intervention and protest, and one pristine. It would be better if the billboard did not have to exist, he seems to say.



VIA NEVADA MUSEUM OF ART

"Mother Earth Is Not For Sale," 1983, by Jack Malotte, ink, acrylic and airbrush on paper. Left, a pictograph by Kai Anderson.

For Art Skeptic, All of History Is Just a Blur

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

political and ideological cataclysms.

But the landscapes in the Zwirner show reawakened something in me: the astonishment I first felt in front of Richter, before these strange, streaky pictures had become quite so familiar. They reawakened, too, my belief that Richter's stutters and equivocations are among the finest models imaginable of how to push through a cultural or intellectual deadlock.

The paintings here include loans from significant public and private collections, some of which have not been seen in the United States for decades. Most are views of the sea, mountain, field or sky, in Germany, in Italy, that tease at the Romantic sublime but remain always clotted and motionless. Yet several of the landscapes at Zwirner are in fact "abstract pictures," to borrow Richter's proudly generic title, where confident gestures get negated and scraped away by a squeegee dragged across the surface.

"There is no difference between a panel of colors and a small, green landscape," Richter said in 1973. And whether in figurative or abstract modes, Richter has always been aiming at the same target: a painting that is valid in the face of history. When kitsch and propaganda fill up every screen, when sincerity and irony seem equally toothless, there is still, in the fog, a path forward.

Richter was born in Dresden in 1932, and he had two artistic educations. The first was in East Germany, in the 1950s, where he learned mural painting in the strictly regulated style of socialist realism: heroic, idealized depictions of workers and commissars. In 1961, just months before the Berlin Wall went up, he defected to West Germany; he enrolled at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, whose free-spirited professors (including the sculptor and performance artist Joseph Beuys) encouraged him to question authority and make art anew.

His fellow young artists in 1960s West Germany were pugnacious. Through Pop-inflected paintings and during druggy Happenings, they filleted the vapid consumer culture that accompanied the "economic miracle" of the postwar era, as well as the Nazi legacy that the Federal Republic had not fully expunged. Richter certainly shared his friends' alienation, but he could never fully get behind an art that was a clear call for action. He had seen culture turn into propaganda twice already: first Nazi propaganda, then Communist propaganda.

And so his paintings would have to speak a less certain language: the language of permanent doubt.

He began to paint directly from photographs: family album pictures, clippings from newspapers or encyclopedias, and eventually images he shot himself. Frequently he would retain the dimensions and cropping of the source image. And then, as in this view of the Bay of Naples, he would gently smear the still-wet oils with a dry brush. Any remaining physical gesture, any mark that suggested certainty, would pass into a blur.

To blur details in a painting, of course, predates the camera by centuries. It was Leonardo's favorite trick: occlude the landscape, or the face of the Mona Lisa, with an atmospheric mist.

But when Richter applied sfumato to his landscapes of the 1970s and 1980s, something else was going on, something less optical. He was not using the blur as Leonardo did, to mimic how the human eye would hazily perceive an iceberg offshore.

He could no longer paint an iceberg with uncritical optical accuracy — not after the sublime landscapes of so much German art and poetry had been repurposed for totalitarianism. In the early 19th century Caspar David Friedrich, an artist Richter loved, had pictured mountains and sea as sublime views of God's creation, and landmarks of a not yet unified German state. But these same Romantics, with their celebration of feeling over reason and of an authentic German *Volk*, would become the idols of the next century's fascists.

To a young artist like Richter, in a democratic postwar Germany, the icebreaker had already capsized: from Friedrich, past Wagner, to Auschwitz. And so softly, hazily, under Richter's dry brush, an iceberg passes into memory.

The blur, then, was an act of productive ambivalence: of acknowledging what painting could not do — and what it could, despite it all. It compels you, when you are in front of one of Richter's landscapes, to switch constantly between the cultural baggage you bring to a pre-existing image (often a photograph) and the sensual scrutiny of the facts of paint. And in that oscillation is the weight of history. "Buche (Beech Tree)," painted in 1987, offers one of this show's most anodyne views of Germany. The heavy tree casts a shadow on the blurry path. The branches at right dissolve into blotchy clouds of green.

The fuzziness corrupts the landscape-as-image. But it redeems the landscape-as-painting. It turns the beech tree from a random snapshot into a collective memory. The beech tree is a witness, a bystander, a memorial.

A collection of them would be a beech forest, or *Buchenwald*.

A tree in a clearing, the sky above Venice, the sun setting over the sea: Such depictions were more innocent once. There were painters, not so long ago, who could depict a rolling field without having to think about blood-and-soil nationalism, or middle-class mass tourism, or average temperatures two degrees warmer than before the Industrial Revolution.

Landscape painting just didn't enjoy that guiltlessness anymore, not in the time and place where Richter began painting, and certainly not now. (Which is why it was a cunning decision for the Zwirner gallery to title this show in German; these "Landschaften" are not just landscapes, but records of a break in civilization.)

Does that mean you give up, though? Take your easel to the barricades, set your canvas on fire? Not necessarily. Unlike in his early, sometimes sarcastic black-and-white photo paintings, Richter's landscapes in color used blurring to restore — even if just partly — possibilities for painting that the world of total image was taking away.

In a view of Davos that Richter painted in 1981, he depicted the Swiss Alps with all the care that the German Romantics brought to these Alpine views, but sapped of passion and specificity. The magic mountain, Thomas Mann's refuge of prewar European civilization, has been recast as an empty Kodak moment — or so it feels at first.

But the image starts to deliquesce at the ridgeline where the mountain meets the mist. A formlessness sets in around the pilot's halo of the sun through the cloud cover.

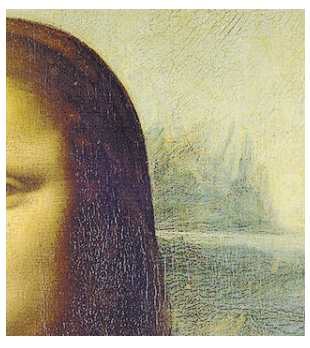
If you can no longer reach the peak along the royal road, you can still ascend in a crab walk. And along this trickier path a new vista emerges: a kind of vacant sublime, a sublime in negation, that makes the most hackneyed view awesome once again.

What redeems Richter's skepticism is the slow, human process of painting: the blur as evidence that we are more than the sum of our camera rolls. He wanted to paint the sea, the sky, the mountain, even while knowing it was impossible to do so without automatically painting the *social meaning* of the sea, the sky, the mountain. The blurred landscape — teasing us with the pleasures of the pastoral, and then letting it melt before our eyes — was nothing less than a moral argument for how to look and how to think when every route seemed barred. You had to do it ambivalently, self-critically, and while risking irrelevance or cliché. But it could be done.

And that same oscillation between faith and doubt in painting animates Richter's abstract pictures. They share with the landscapes an abiding skepticism of the individual artist's intentions — even as he still refuses to leave everything to chance or pre-manufacture.

The abstract spills and drips of postwar

Right, Gerhard Richter, "Vesuv (Vesuvius)" (1976), rising above the Tyrrhenian Sea, overlooking the entire Bay of Naples. Like Leonardo da Vinci with the Mona Lisa, below, Richter often occluded scenes with an atmospheric mist.



Above, "Eisberg im Nebel (Iceberg in Mist)," 1982; right, "Davos S.," 1981; far right from top, "Venedig (Venice)," 1986; "Seestück (Gegenlicht), (Seascape [Contre-jour])," 1969; below, "Buche (Beech Tree)," 1987.

IMAGES BY GERHARD RICHTER; VIA DAVID ZWIRNER

Gerhard Richter: Landschaften
Through July 10 at David Zwirner, 537 West 20th Street, Manhattan; davidzwirner.com.

American painting, understood as heroic gestures of free men, were not possible for him. But the squeegee, like the blur, was so much more than a tool of cancellation.

Each erasure was a new mark of its own. Each "No, impossible" was a "Yes, still possible." In abstraction or landscape, in intimate views or mural-scaled color charts, Richter was discovering how an old, slow medium like painting could still count.

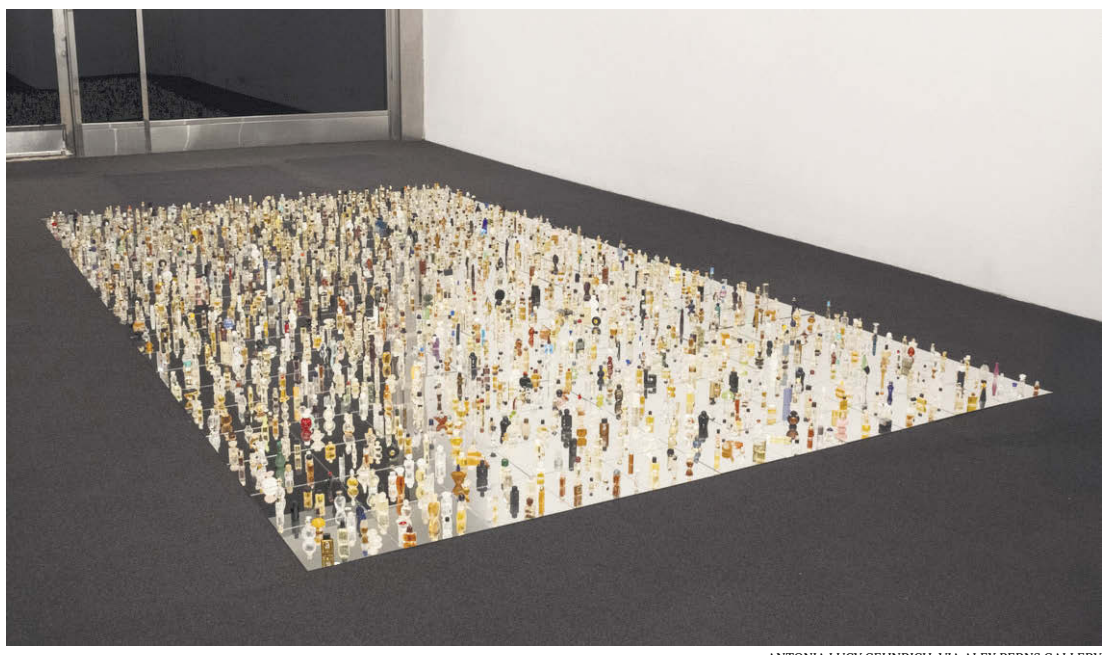
Today we are cursed, even more than when Richter painted the works in this extraordinary show, to live in a time of extreme image hyperplasia. Computationally produced pictures (there is nothing "artificially intelligent" about them) are now inundating every pipe and orifice of our personal and political lives. The image produced by prompting a large language model glitches as it propagates. It has no roots, no referents. And as these A.I. models produce imagery at a crazed clip, they are hollowing out the very basis of depiction — worming through the last little faith we once had in images to reveal us the world as it is.

But Gerhard Richter has already shown us (has made a life of showing us) how to keep our grip amid out-of-control image overproduction. He has modeled for us how to look seriously, and create legitimately, when the image is in perpetual question.

Where the sea meets the sky, where the eye fails and every word sounds artificial, he insisted that individual doubt could be the wellspring of a new mode of vision. This is a doubt that tests what the truth is, even as history passes into vapor.

Galleries

By ANDREW RUSSETH



ANTONIA LUCY GEHNRICH, VIA ALEX BERNS GALLERY

An installation view of Antonia Lucy Gehnrich's New York solo debut, including some 2,000 perfume bottles on mirrors.

Lee Kang So

Through June 20. Korean Cultural Center New York, 122 East 32nd Street, Manhattan; 212-759-9550, koreanculture.org.

More than 20 years have passed since Lee Kang So, a giant in his native South Korea, last had a solo exhibition in New York. This show of 30 works ends that drought by nimbly charting his multifarious practice over the past half-century, as he progressed from radical experimentalist to celebrated painter.

The highlights are seven large canvases from the past few decades — brushy and assured compositions in black, white and gray, some with traces of figuration, like the outlines of a deer's head or a floating duck, one of Lee's signature motifs. (A two-person show with the similarly enigmatic Susan Rothenberg, who also depicted animals, would be enriching.)

The most recent painting, "The Wind Blows-26047" (2026), suggests broad calligraphic marks caught in a storm, evanescing in a world that is always in flux, entropic, a defining focus for Lee. He has made ceramics by dropping hunks of clay atop one another, letting gravity and chance take their course, and in photographs from 1977, he sculpts sand along a river in Daegu into different shapes: earthworks destined to deteriorate. ("A Field of Becoming" is the show's fitting title.)

Lee's approach carries a clear ethos: Try to make beautiful things, even though they won't last, maybe even because they won't last. In an early video, also from 1977, he stands in front of the screen, painting it until he has disappeared. Then the tape cuts, and he begins again.

LEE KANG SO, VIA THE KOREAN CULTURAL CENTER NEW YORK

"Untitled-90086" (1990), an oil on canvas by the South Korean artist Lee Kang So, is part of his first solo show in New York in more than 20 years.

Altoon Sultan

Through July 18. Hoffman Donahue, 99 Bowery, Manhattan; 646-288-9394, hoffmandonahue.com.

If you are skipping the Semiquincentennial extravaganzas in Washington, consider celebrating at this quietly stunning show by Altoon Sultan. It has 13 little paintings that obliquely concern the nation's agricultural sphere while evincing a can-do zest for invention, a reverence for the everyday and a good-natured skepticism — America at its best.

The artist, who lives in Vermont and whose landscapes are in museum collections, uses egg tempera and calfskin parchment, age-old mediums, to present industrial farm equipment close up, in exquisite detail and radiant colors. A green gear shift protrudes from what appears to be a tractor, and thick black cables are screwed into a teal-colored contraption with a less discernible identity. Farmers and crops are absent, but the sun is shining. Everything is still.

Sultan works from photographs and nods to interwar Precisionism, but her pictures are intimate and searching, never slick, as sturdy and handmade as a poem by Wallace Stevens. If these tools sometimes feel aloof or even fearsome, that is because they are important. They help keep us alive, and yet we hardly know them. In an accompanying news release, she sounds a political note: "How do we accept the use of dirty, gas-guzzling machinery to produce food?"

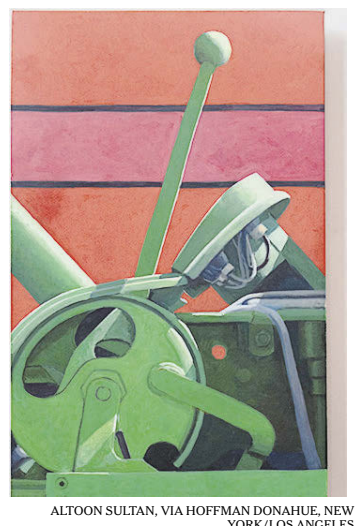
As drones, artificial intelligence and other technologies enter farming, the subjects of these paintings may appear increasingly outmoded and quaint. Already, as the number of farms in the United States declines and rural areas depopulate, they exude a certain sadness.

Antonia Lucy Gehnrich

Through June 20. Alex Berns, 354 Broadway, Manhattan; 847-840-1823, no website.

Since September, the art dealer Alex Berns has been staging scrappy exhibitions in a two-floor space with blacked-out windows, intermingling canonical figures, local legends and intriguing newcomers. (Hans Hofmann, Blair Thurman and Zoë Argires, for example, all in one show.) His latest is the New York solo debut of Antonia Lucy Gehnrich, who has arranged 231 glass mirrors, each 10 inches square, into a rectangle on the floor, placing some 2,000 miniature perfume bottles, variously alluring and chintzy, atop them.

It's a delirious and faintly surreal sight — far too much to take in — a kind of partial, lo-fi Yayoi Kusama "Infinity Mirror Room" that riffs with punkish élan on Carl Andre's gridded floor sculptures, Josiah McElheny's mirrored boxes and Haim Steinbach's product displays. Take it as a game board of obsessive consumerism and manufactured desire or as a shimmering readymade installation of glass, plastic, liquid and language, via labels printed with names like Tuscan, Jaipur and Miroir No. 3. Either way, it is a gutsy, piquant premiere.



ALTOON SULTAN, VIA HOFFMAN DONAHUE, NEW YORK/LOS ANGELES

Altoon Sultan's "Tall Handle" (2025), egg tempera on calfskin parchment stretched over wood.

'Fill'd Them, Emptied Them'

Through June 28. Sheerly Touch-Ya Warehouse, 74-12 88th Street, Queens; 202-380-6545, shisanwu.net/filldthememptiedthem2026.

The summer-group-show competition has barely begun, but this master class in cast sculpture, installed at a distribution center for a hosiery company, is already leading the pack. Nineteen artists — young and old, famed and fledgling — have contributed examples that tend toward the uncanny and unclassifiable.

Traces of the body linger. Yu Ji's concrete masses resemble bent-over torsos, and a small bronze by Keith Edmier is a death cast of his father's ring finger. Pewter ears by Lotus L. Kang are perched on a shipping pallet. Dry ice helps Matthew Barney's petroleum-jelly dumbbell keep its shape as it rests inside a cooler, ready for transport.

In a separate area, the show's curator, Isabella Achenbach, has put on display molds (or parts of molds) used to create these works, a charming move that reveals typically unseen labor. The amorphous one that Jean-Luc Moulène wielded for his piece, based on a Dr. Doom mask, is at least as charismatic as the polished-concrete final product. (The checklist is an ode to casting methods, lined with terms like "mother mold," "waste mold," "open-face mold" and "investment mold.")

Speaking of unseen: Major sculpture shows have become scarcer in New York galleries as rents have risen and collecting tastes have grown more conservative, the artist Josh Kline noted in a recent essay. Mercifully, deep in Queens, heady three-dimensional pleasures await.

VIA SHISANWU LLC; PHOTOGRAPH BY DOMINIC PALARCHIO

An installation view of "Fill'd Them, Emptied Them," which includes works by 19 artists at a distribution center for a hosiery company in Queens.

SUMMER TV PREVIEW

APPLE TV

COLIN REMAS BROWN/HBO MAX

JASON LAVERIS/APPLE TV

JOHN JOHNSON/HBO MAX

Left, "Ted Lasso" returns on Apple TV; top, "Stuart Fails to Save the Universe" debuts on HBO Max; a second season arrives for "Sugar" on Apple TV; HBO's "Lanterns" makes its entry into the DC Universe.

A New 'Ted Lasso' and 29 Other Shows to Watch

Also, 'The Bear' serves its last course, and Larry David collaborates with Barack and Michelle Obama on a series.

By MIKE HALE

It won't be all World Cup and semiquincentennial.

The summer television and streaming schedule includes the return of favorites like "Ted Lasso" and (for the last time) "The Bear," and movies that will wrap up the stories of "Call My Agent!" and "Heartstopper."

The new shows include a "Big Bang Theory" spinoff featuring Stuart the comics guy ("Stuart Fails to Save the Universe"), a comedy about an aging professional golfer starring Will Ferrell ("The Hawk") and a stare-down between J.K. Simmons and Titus Welliver ("The Westies").

Here are 30 shows that might catch your eye, listed in chronological order. All dates are subject to change.

'AFROPOP'

This documentary anthology — the full title is "Afropop: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange" — is back for an 18th season, even though its producer, Black Public Media, lost about half its funding to congressional cuts. The season begins with "Listen to Me," about maternal health care for Black women, and continues on July 2 with "This World Is Not My Own," about the artist Nellie Mae Rowe (portrayed by Uzo Aduba). (PBS.org, Monday)

'SUGAR'

Colin Farrell returns as a private eye who takes being an outsider to a whole new level. The first season of this movie-besotted, sci-fi-inflected fantasia on film noir style was terrifically entertaining. Its big twist (at least its first one) is out of the bag, and Mark Protosevich, the show's creator, is no longer the showrunner, so we'll see how it goes. (Apple TV, June 19)

'THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT'

Netflix's contribution to the celebration of America's 250th birthday is a five-part documentary, from Tom Hanks and Gary Goetzman's production company, about the early years of our democracy. In addition to historians and political scientists, the interviewees include a bipartisan selection of political figures, including Hillary Clinton, Kamala Harris and Nancy Pelosi along with Ted Cruz, Rand Paul and Mike Pence. (Netflix, June 24)

'A WOMAN OF SUBSTANCE'

Barbara Taylor Bradford's best seller about a servant girl who becomes a retail mogul was made into a mini-series shown on Channel 4 in 1985; the 13.8 million viewers for the final episode is still the British channel's record. So naturally Channel 4 has made an entirely new mini-series out of the same story, this time with Brenda Blethyn as the older Emma Harte, who was played by Deborah Kerr in the original. (BritBox, June 24)

'THE BEAR'

The fifth and final season begins the day after Carmy (Jeremy Allen White) announces that he is leaving the restaurant. (FX and Hulu, June 25)

'LIFE, LARRY AND THE PURSUIT OF UNHAPPINESS'

Larry David and the Obamas collaborate on a series that will have something to do with American history. It could be great or it could give a whole new meaning to cringe comedy. (HBO and HBO Max, June 26)

'ADVENTURE TIME: SIDE QUESTS'

The latest "Adventure Time" series puts the focus back on Finn and his magical dog, Jake. It's a prequel in which the boy and his dog will have "lighter, self-contained adventures." (Disney+ and Hulu, June 29)

'ZORRO'

Jean Dujardin brings his swashbuckling charm to Don Diego de la Vega, who, in this lighthearted French costume drama, has renounced violence and retired his masked alter ego, Zorro. Of course events in 1821 Los Angeles will conspire to change his mind. (MHz Choice, June 30)

'ELLE'

"From the World of 'Legally Blonde.'" Lexi Minetree plays the future Harvard law student Elle Woods in a prequel series set in high school. (Amazon Prime Video, July 1)

'HUMAN VAPOR'

The South Korean writer and producer Yeon Sang-ho ("Train to Busan"), the Japanese studio Toho and Netflix collaborated on this series about a serial killer who can transform into gas. It is based on a 1960 Toho film by the Godzilla-meister, Ishiro Honda. (Netflix, July 2)

'SILO'

Among the dystopian life-underground shows, which include "Paradise" and "Fallout," "Silo" has been the most absorbing. Season 3 will try to keep up the tension while adding a second timeline that flows out of the aboveground twist at the end of the Season 2 finale. (Apple TV, July 3)

'DAS BOOT'

The first season of this German drama — a sequel series to the claustrophobic 1981 film set on a World War II U-boat — appeared on Hulu in 2019; the three subsequent seasons have not been shown in America. MHz Choice is promising to show all four, with Season 2 scheduled for Aug. 4. (MHz Choice, July 7)

'THE FIVE STAR WEEKEND'

TV's current favorite iteration of the "woman's picture" is a glossy melodrama or thriller set at a beach house bound to inspire murderous jealousy in the viewer. This one stars Jennifer Garner as the famous food blogger whose life isn't as perfect as it seems; D'Arcy Carden, Gemma Chan, Regina Hall and Chloë Sevigny play the friends who come to her house on Nantucket to hash things out. (Peacock, July 9)

'LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE'

This new adaptation of Laura Ingalls Wilder's frontier novels (set in what we now think of as the Midwest) addresses what Netflix says is "the surging demand for feel-good, heartland-rooted comfort programming." (Netflix, July 9)

'THE WESTIES'

It's tough-guy heaven: J.K. Simmons as the leader of the Westies, the famously brutal Irish gang that ran New York's Hell's Kitchen, and Titus Welliver as an Irish cop. Created by Chris Brancato, who gave us "Narcos," the series is set in the 1980s during the construction of the Javits Center. (MGM+, July 12)

'LUCKY'

The crime caper based on a best-selling novel is a broad category these days, but maybe the cast justifies this one: Anya Taylor-Joy as a con artist on the run, along with Annette Bening, Timothy Olyphant, Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor, William Fichtner and Eric Lange. Jonathan Tropper ("Your Friends and Neighbors") created the show based on the novel by Marissa Stapley. (Apple TV, July 15)

'RIDE OR DIE'

Beginning with a James Bond-style Alpine escape on skis, we're in the world of action comedy played against beautiful European scenery. Hannah Waddingham of "Ted Lasso" is a super-assassin, and Octavia Spencer is her true-crime-buff best friend; the wonderful Bill Nighy plays a character called, ominously, the Director. (Amazon Prime Video, July 15)

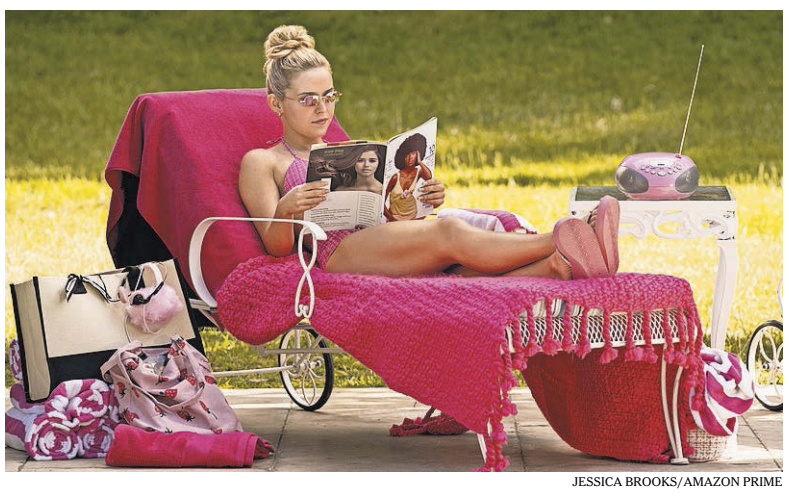
'THE HAWK'

Will Ferrell as a broken-down golfer who drags himself out on the course — and tortures everyone around him — because he is one major short of a grand slam. (Netflix, July 16)

'HEARTSTOPPER FOREVER'

A feature-length finale should provide some clues to the future fates of 18-year-old Nick (Kit Connor) and 17-year-old Charlie (Joe Locke), and one last sugar rush for fans of the three seasons of this British romantic comedy. (Netflix, July 17)

ERIC ZACHANOWICH/NETFLIX



JESSICA BROOKS/AMAZON PRIME

AMAZON PRIME

From top, the Ingalls family in a new Netflix adaptation of "Little House on the Prairie"; Lexi Minetree plays the high school version of Elle Woods in "Elle," a prequel series to "Legally Blonde," on Amazon Prime Video; from left, Hannah Waddingham, Octavia Spencer and Ed Skrein in the Amazon action comedy "Ride or Die."

'BLOODY MURRAY'

Naomi Levov and Rotem Sela play Murray and Dana, 30-something roommates who are a little too involved in each other's lives in this bittersweet Israeli rom-com. (ChaiFlicks, July 19)

'STUART FAILS TO SAVE THE UNIVERSE'

The supporting characters in "The Big Bang Theory" were always more believable nerds than the leads, and this new spinoff centers on them: the comic-shop owner, Stuart (Kevin Sussman); his assistant manager and girlfriend, Denise (Lauren Lapkus); the sad geologist, Bert (Brian Posehn); and the inexcusable Kripke (John Ross Bowie). This time around, they're action heroes in an alternate reality. (HBO Max, July 23)

'FIGHTLAND'

50 Cent extends his production mini-empire to Britain with a violent crime drama (natch) that combines boxing and the London underworld. Nicholas Pinnock, Deborah Ayorinde and Howard Charles play father, mother and boxing-champion-turned-convict son. (Starz, July 31)

'LIONESS'

The quality of Taylor Sheridan's shows tends to be in inverse proportion to the number of cows involved; this spy series focused on female C.I.A. operatives has virtually no cows. Zoe Saldaña returns as Joe, the ultra-tough team leader, in Season 3. (Paramount+, Aug. 2)

'TED LASSO'

Season 4: Not bad for a show based on a couple of short comic promos for NBC's soccer coverage. Three years after Ted (Jason Sudeikis) returned to America, he comes back to London to coach the Richmond women's team. (Apple TV, Aug. 5)

'THE SHARDS'

Ryan Murphy and Bret Easton Ellis have collaborated to develop a series from Ellis's autobiographical novel, set during his senior year at the exclusive Buckley School in Los Angeles. Apparently there were no regulatory safeguards preventing these two storytelling extremists from working together. (FX, Aug. 5)

'IRREVERSIBLE'

Set in an insular town on the Portuguese coast, this sober, closely observed crime drama follows a cop (Rafael Morais) and a psychologist (Margarida Vila-Nova) as they investigate a murder. (Viaplay, Aug. 13)

'LANTERNS'

It's the third series in the canonical DC Universe — can you name the first two? Kyle Chandler plays Hal Jordan, a veteran Green Lantern and founding Justice League member, and Aaron Pierre plays a new Lantern; they're intergalactic peacekeepers, but at the moment they're looking into murders in Nebraska. The appealing cast includes Kelly Macdonald, Nathan Fillion, Garret Dillahunt, Nicole Ari Parker and Laura Linney. The answer to the quiz: "Creature Commandos" and "Peacemaker." (HBO and HBO Max, Aug. 16)

'CALL MY AGENT! THE MOVIE'

The popular French comedy series about a fictional talent agency and its semi-fictional clients, which ended in 2020 after four seasons, is revived in a streaming feature. Andréa (Camille Cottin) is beset by a series of familiar crises when she tries to direct her first film, and her old colleagues regather to "help." (Netflix, Sept. 10)

'SLOW HORSES'

The lovable and highly effective losers stationed in the MI5 hinterland known as Slough House return for a sixth season with a new showrunner (Gaby Chiappe replaces Will Smith). In the new story, based on the Mick Herron novels "Joe Country" and "Slough House," the slow horses themselves are the targets. (Apple TV, Sept. 16)

'SOUTH PARK'

In the show's 28th season finale in December, the Antichrist — the love child of Donald Trump and his tradwife, Satan — committed suicide in the womb in the style of Jeffrey Epstein. (How he got the bedsheets in there wasn't clear.) Why do Trey Parker and Matt Stone's corporate overlords — the same people who used to oversee "The Late Show With Stephen Colbert" and are currently streamlining "60 Minutes" — keep allowing this sort of thing? Maybe it helps that the show's Trump is so svelte, active and gosh-darn cute. (Comedy Central, Sept. 16)

OTHER RETURNING SHOWS

Acorn: "Harry Wild," June 22; "Inspector Ellis," July 6; **Adult Swim:** "My Adventures With Superman," Saturday; **AMC:** "The Walking Dead: Dead City," July 26; **Apple TV:** "Camp Snoopy," June 26; "Trying," July 8; "Women in Blue," Aug. 12; ; "Dark Matter," Aug. 28; **BritBox:** "Trigger Point," Thursday; **Disney+:** "X-Men '97," July 1; **HBO:** "House of the Dragon," June 21; "Hard Knocks With the Seattle Seahawks," Aug. 11; **Hulu:** "King of the Hill," July 20; "Futurama," Aug. 3; **MHz Choice:** "The Traveler," Tuesday; "The Art of Crime," June 23; "Nora Sand," June 30; **Netflix:** "Sweet Magnolias," available now; "America's Sweethearts: Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders," Tuesday; "Another Self," June 24; "Avatar: The Last Airbender," June 25; "Survival of the Thickest," July 2; "Ransom Canyon," July 23; "One Hundred Years of Solitude," Aug. 5; "Tires," Aug. 13; **Paramount+:** "The Agency" June 21; "Tyler Perry's Ruthless" June 30; "Star Trek: Strange New Worlds," July 23; **PBS:** "Grantchester," Sunday; "Marble Hall Murders," Sept. 6; "Marlow Murder Club," Sept. 6; **Peacock:** "The Capture," Thursday; **STARZ:** "Power Book III: Raising Kanan," Friday; **SYFY:** "The Ark," July 29; **Up Faith & Family:** "Hudson & Rex," available now.